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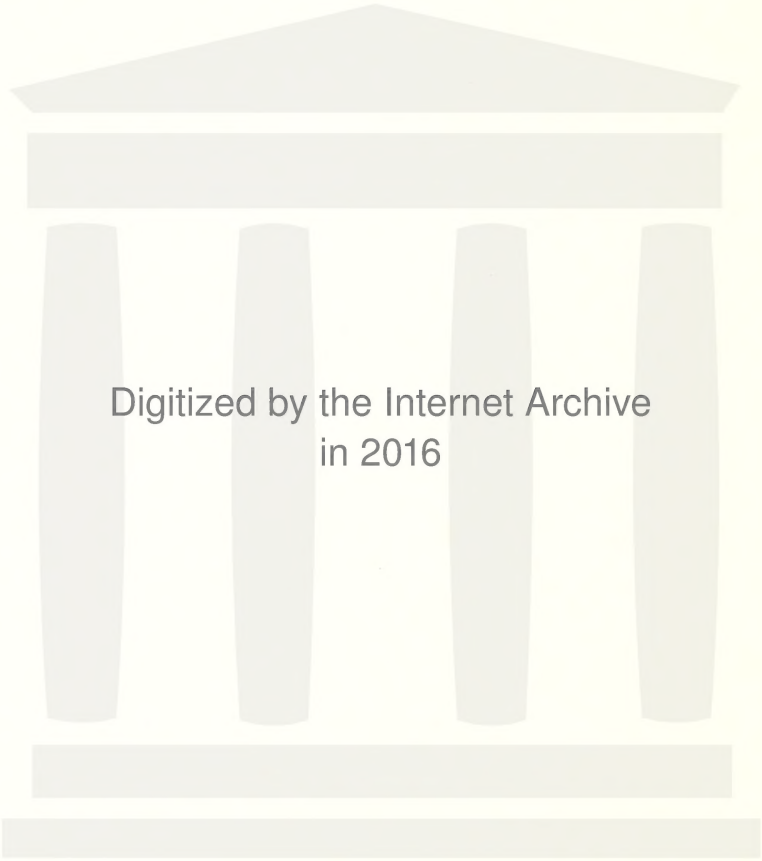
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Facts and fictions of
Antâonio Lobo Antunes

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Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies
19/20

Facts and Fictions of António Lobo Antunes

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Dartmouth, Massachusetts

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Volume Price Information

This volume (double issue) of *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* may be purchased for $39.95.

Portuguese Litrary and Cultural Studies 19/20
Tagus Press at UMass Dartmouth
www.portstudies.umassd.edu
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Manufactured in the United States of America
General Editor: Frank F. Sousa
Designed by Spencer Ladd
Cover photo of António Lobo Antunes © Mathieu Bourgois

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For all inquiries, please contact:
Tagus Press at UMass Dartmouth
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285 Old Westport Road
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ISSN:1521-804X
ISBN: 978-1-933227-12-2
Library of Congress Control Number: 2011933789

5 4 3 2 1

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Prescription to Read Me

António Lobo Antunes
Translated by Valéria M. Souza

Whenever anyone declares having read a book of mine I am disappointed by the error. That's because my books are not to be read in the sense usually called reading: the only way it seems to me to approach the novels that I write is to catch them in the same manner that one catches an illness. It was said of Björn Borg, in comparing him with other tennis players, that the others played tennis, while Borg played something else. You will only understand what I conveniently called novels, just as I could have called them poems, visions, what have you, if you see them as something else. Each of you must renounce your own key, the one we all have with which to open life, our own and that of others, and use the key that the text gives you. In any other way it becomes incomprehensible, given that words are only signs of intimate feelings, and the characters, situations, and plot the superficial pretexts that I use in order to lead you to the bottom of the other side of soul. The true adventure that I propose is that which the narrator and the reader create together in the blackness of the unconscious, at the root of human nature. The reader who does not understand this will become aware only of the most shallow and least important aspects of the books: the country, the male-female relationship, the problem of identity and the search for it, Africa and the brutality of colonial exploitation, etc., themes perhaps very important from a political, or social, or anthropological point of view, but that have very little to do with my work. The most that, in general, we receive from life is a certain awareness of it that

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 15-17.
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arrives too late. Therefore in my works there are no exclusive meanings or definitive conclusions: there are only material symbols of fantastic illusions, the truncated rationality that is ours. You must abandon yourselves to its apparent carelessness, to its suspensions, to the long ellipses, to the shadowy comings and goings of the waves that, little by little, will carry you to an encounter with fatal darkness, indispensable to the rebirth and renovation of the spirit. It is necessary that our trust in common values dissolve page by page, that our deceptive interior cohesion gradually lose the meaning that it does not possess and yet that we gave it, in order that another order be born from that shock, perhaps bitter but inevitable. I would like the novels in bookstores, rather than being placed beside one another, to be kept apart and in a hermetic box, so as not to infect other narratives or unprepared readers: it costs dearly to seek a lie and find a truth. Walk through my pages as in a dream, because it is in that dream, in its clarity and in its shadows that you will go about finding the meanings of the novel, in an intensity that corresponds to your instincts of clarity and to the shadows of your prehistory. And, once the voyage is over and the book is closed, convalesce. I demand that the reader have a voice among the voices of the novel or poem, or vision, or whatever name you feel like giving it in order to be able to have a place among the demons and the angels of the Earth. Any other approach to what I write is a reading, not an initiation to the wilderness where the visitor will have his flesh consumed in solitude and in happiness. It is not complicated if you accept the work as this illness I referred to above: you will see that you return from yourselves loaded with treasures. Some, almost all, of the misunderstandings in relation to what I do derive from the fact that what I write is approached in the way we are taught to approach any narrative. And the surprise comes from the realization that there is no narrative in the usual sense of the term, but only long concentric circles that contract and apparently suffocate us. And they suffocate us apparently so that we can breathe better. Abandon your clothing of civilized creatures, full of restrictions, and allow yourselves to listen to the voice of the body. Notice how the figures that populate what I say are not described and almost do not possess distinctness: because they are yourselves. I said some time ago that the ideal book would be that in which all of the pages were mirrors: they reflect me and they reflect the reader, until neither of us knows which of the two we are. I seek that each one be both and that we return from those mirrors like someone returning from the cavern of what used to be. It is the only salvation that I know and, even if I knew

others, it is the only one that interests me. Now would be the time for me to be clear regarding what I think about the art of writing a novel, I who in general respond to the questions of journalists with an amused levity because they seem superfluous to me: as soon as we know the answers, all questions become unimportant. And please, relinquish the faculty of judgment: as soon as one understands, judgment ends, and we still ourselves, astonished, before the luminous simplicity of everything. Because my novels are much simpler than they appear: they are, as novels in general, the experience of cannibalism through continual hunger, and the struggle against incalculable but practical adventures. The problem is that they lack what is essential: the intense dignity of a whole creature. Faulkner, whom I no longer like as much as I used to, claimed to have discovered that writing is a very beautiful thing: it makes men walk upon their hind feet and project an enormous shadow. I ask that you recognize this shadow, understand that it belongs to you and, beyond understanding that it belongs to you, that it is what may, in the best of cases, give meaning to your life.

Note: This text was originally published by *Visão* (January 3, 2002). URL: www.visaoonline.pt

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Still Facts and Living Fictions: The Literary Work of António Lobo Antunes, An Introduction

Maria Alzira Seixo

António Lobo Antunes is undoubtedly one of the best writers in contemporary Western literature. One may be skeptical to accept this assertion at face value, but the only way to check its validity is by reading the novels and volumes of chronicles published by the author since 1979.[1] As we read on we recognize: a) a particular sensitivity to important events in contemporary Portuguese history, which are related to major changes and trends in our civilization (fascist dictatorship, colonial war, democratic revolutions, the status of women, socialist endeavors, postcolonial issues, and terrorist attacks); b) the writer's individual experience, as a participant in Portugal's war against the pro-independence movements in Africa in the 1960s and 70s, as an officer of the so-called Portuguese Empire under Salazar's government, as a military doctor during the war and as a practitioner in psychiatric hospitals after his return home—as a consequence of which he associates colonialism and the practice of medicine with everyday life: childhood, family, marriage, love, eroticism, friendship, loneliness, social handicaps, old age, the proximity of death, and, above all, both the zeal and the pain in the task of writing; c) a very original conception of narrative and a beautifully organized verbal rhythm, which transforms the themes and social concerns of his novels into perfect fictional poetry.

As a matter of fact, while Lobo Antunes's work is shaped according to patterns of fiction, his entire *oeuvre* abundantly reveals an intimate cohesion

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 19-43.
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between fiction and poetry. This becomes most evident in his particular way of composing the literary text, as well as in the manner in which he brings autobiographical components into the fiction, making it come to life and rousing the reader's interest.

1. Still Facts and Living Fictions

Events and experience constitute the basic ingredients in all of the author's novels. They seem to be connected with a profound sense of space inhabited by the narrator (present in many of Lobo Antunes's novels, either as a specific character or as a figure representing the writer himself), both in a territorial sense and in the sense of the problematic insertion of the individual in the community. The events are mainly facts which occurred in the narrator's life (or have been transferred to the existence of other narrative voices driving the plot) or in the lives of members of his (their) family, relatives, friends, people existing within the narrator's personal environment. They are evoked in the enunciative situation of writing and, as such, develop a feeling for time passing (and for time retained), which is due to the power of memory and to the possibility of their being maintained by obsessive recurrences.

Lobo Antunes's fictional writing emphasizes the specific vision of particular events experienced by individual (and diverse) voices which try (diversely) to report facts and situations, much more through the resonance they create inside each character's being than through the actual way in which they are supposed to have happened. That is why the sense of space progressively loses its pertinence as a precise location: as each narrative develops, the relationship with space becomes simultaneously a relationship with time. Consequently, individual identity is framed within a dynamic perspective and with this comes a negative feeling of instability and loss, as memory both maintains the sameness of personal perceptions of life and evolves in its interpretation and in the emergence of new feelings, thereby shaping the problematic which is characteristic of the human soul.

Yet the senses of place and identity are strongly shaken not only by the precariousness of memory (in traumatic, dependent or obsessive situations) but primarily because historical and social circumstances lead the community and individuals within it to physical and psychological displacement, as well as to the existential and epistemological uncertainty of being. It is for this reason that subjectivity emerges on such a large scale in the novels of António Lobo Antunes. The uncertainty of being, or, more specifically, the problem-

atic sense of existence and the consciousness of life's senselessness are widely exposed in these novels. Interestingly enough, facing events (in one's family, surroundings or community) is barely an objective attitude. On the contrary, it is the act of looking at particular situations and considering the facts around them that conveys, in these novels, the evolving impression of a character observing what happens in his or her life and in his or her world, and experiencing common situations as well as exceptional circumstances.

The distance that remains between the act of looking at objects (facts, events, things) and the understanding of their possible meanings, or even of their meaningless presence, constitutes the very nature of space in the conception of the fictional world. This is shaped by subjectivity and by the collapse of identity, which means that any notion of historicity derives from a long, mutable way of looking. And what really develops in this fictional writing is not the story, neither the plot nor the specific situations (they are all recurrent), but the fiction in the configuration of its imagery, with a strong component of poetry and lyrical imagination.

Experience is the heart of fiction in António Lobo Antunes's work. Instead of taking some specific facts or general topics on which he might write a novel, Lobo Antunes clearly prefers to inculcate his personal views on these topics and to deform those facts, or at least to present them through partial or tendentious insights. Memory, ideology, conventions, destructive rebellion, traumatic acquisitions and painful losses are some of the conditions that regulate the particular view informing the subject-matter of the narrative, as we can see in his descriptions of indigenous Angolans:

> The drumbeats of the Luchazi tribesmen were concerts of tachycardia, checked only by the shadows from racing out of control toward their own anguish. The eyeballs of the musicians were like phosphorescent boiled eggs, illuminated by straw fires made to stretch goatskin for drums. Each hut, flanked by identical images of the spirit Zumbi, lord of the forebears and of the dead, acquired the shapeless contours of unease and terror. The dogs added their fearful barks to the cries of the children and to the inquisitive cacklings of the chickens. The darkness was like a long corridor in which we wandered desperately searching through the silence for reminders of ourselves as we had once been. The sweat of the black bodies, fatty and juicy, had a different texture from that which ran down my spine, and I felt myself to be the melancholy heir of an old awkward and dying county, of a decaying Europe, confronted by a people whose inexhaustible vital-

> ity I had first sensed, years before, in the Promethean solos of Louis Armstrong, exorcising bitterness with the muscular joy of his song. (*South* 35-36)[2]

It is a matter of fact that most of Lobo Antunes's novels are based on real events that occurred during the last few decades in Portugal and in particular conditions of his own life, but the main literary fact is that such events and conditions of existence are frequently transformed and deformed, subjected to the activity of fiction and, more importantly, dependent on the relation that makes experience overlap with textuality.

In other words, the plots in Lobo Antunes's novels develop out of specific events, which are determined from the very beginning by his personal experience, but can only be perceived through literary expression, in a sentence, using particular words in certain positions. And this is what really matters in the practice of writing developed by the author. If the "fabula" is a special organization of the world in fiction, then the time experienced in life can only be experienced in fiction through the continuity, or discontinuity, of the sentence—through the accidents of its syntactic construction, the choice of relations established between nouns and verbs, adjectives and pronouns, and other morphological categories which configure this world for the reader. By this I mean that experience, in Lobo Antunes's novels, is not only autobiography, knowledge of the environment, perception of current world problems, or feeling the impulse for life, but also the way in which narrative, sentence, and even the word itself is organized in literary discourse, in the author's own poetical composition. In reading Lobo Antunes's texts, we must separate the experience of living from that of writing, which, in final analysis, means that the concept of experience in relation to António Lobo Antunes (as well as a few other novelists, such as Joseph Conrad) has to be shaped according to a notion of activity inserted in the writing much more than in existence, although it cannot be exempted from it.

Facts and fictions are thus not alternatives in António Lobo Antunes's writing, but neither are they simultaneous. In reading his novels, the Portuguese reader recognizes (more or less) the psychiatrist the author is or the child and young man he was; s/he identifies (more or less) the places he describes, and may remember (more or less) the historical facts he puts into fiction, which deal (more or less) with the circumstances of his life and that of his relatives. But all of these possible facts are subjected to deformations: they present changes and demand new forms of perception in the reader's mind.

Facts are envisaged, in Lobo Antunes's work, as if they were quiet and permanent impressions of life that remain in the narrator's mind forever—that is, as timeless existential configurations, but developing an inner sense of duration (the legacy of Proust and Faulkner); the living circumstances as they occurred are fixed in a kind of aura, generated both by strong obsession and by a partial oblivion which erases their vivid characteristics. In so doing, it is the text itself that attributes to events the kind of life that they lose by their constantly remembered presence. And as facts are made constant by their permanence in the minds of the characters, they finally recover a kind of pulsation in the textual construction, and fiction is what really becomes life in Lobo Antunes's novels.

2. The Philosophy of Composition

Antunes's writing stems from a very well informed and educated sense of cultural heritage in literature and in art. It begins as a torrent of metaphors and intertextual allusions in his first novels (namely *South of Nowhere*) and develops into a very sober and lean literary discourse, in which the building up of detail concentrates more and more on stylistic repetition, lyrical implications and metafictional concerns (particularly in his latter work, following the publication of *The Inquisitors' Manual*). In this respect, it is worth recalling the role of some earlier writers who used this literary mode: Tolstoy (with his epic, or counter-epic, views and multi-faceted perception of events), Proust (with his specific feeling for time and his immense gallery of characters), Céline (through criticism, abjection, and the grotesque), Faulkner (through the disruptive power of memory), Beckett (with his concern with minimal and apparently insignificant notations) and William Gaddis (with his preference for continuous dialogue, chattering or stream of consciousness).

However, Antunes's mode cannot be completely assimilated to theirs, for many reasons. For example, Antunes's dialogue is constant but not continuous, as in Gaddis: in fact, it is constantly interrupted; minimal and insignificant details are concerted in Beckett and disconcerted in Antunes's discourse; the power of memory is determinant but organized in a multiple set of voices, so that disruption verges on dissemination; and, in Lobo Antunes, abjection refers to social criticism and leftist views of the world that carry grotesque and parodic intentions. Moreover, rather than a classic structure, as in Tolstoy's novels, the author of *The Return of the Caravels* privileges the manifestation of the characters (presence, physical details, voices, silences); and rather than

Proust's conception of time, Lobo Antunes enacts an emergence of place out of a theory of time—which we can see, for instance, when the narrator is in a Lisbon bar remembering Africa, in *South of Nowhere*, or in settings in small locations such as a house, an apartment, a room, a yard, a loft (as in *The Natural Order of Things*).

This leads us to the point that Antunes's composition of the novel is complex and differentiated. It approximates a kind of report concentrating on subjectivity, as mentioned above, especially in his first four novels, but has changed into the enactment of a multiple set of voices, beginning at least with the works published after *Fado alexandrino*, including *Act of the Damned*, *The Return of the Caravels*, and the three books that followed, which have been called the Benfica Trilogy, and arriving at a kind of poetics of distortion, derision, and erasure—the determinant components of his latest novels, since *The Inquisitors' Manual*.[3]

Distortion, derision, and erasure exist simultaneously, constituting a very particular way of representing individuals, communities, historical events, autobiographical data, fictional directions, and also the main character, but especially the specific relation between space and time that we have already examined in part. Also, the constant and obsessive presence of Africa in the author's novels reveals his concern with dissecting Portugal's former colonialist designs and with emphasizing a sense of place and dislocation, as we can see in *South of Nowhere*. Furthermore, when the author suggests a reversal of a long-lived historical situation by means of literary parody, as is the case in *The Return of the Caravels*, a new perspective, which can be related to postcolonial views and concerns, arises.

In his famous essay on *The Raven*, Edgar Allan Poe draws attention to the organization of the plot: "Nothing is more clear than that every plot worth the name must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention" (104). If we accept the postulate, more than one century after the words were written, that the plot is still the basic element in the construction of a literary work (and I accept that it is, with some change of modalities in both expression and reception), then we may say that in Lobo Antunes's works the phase of the conception and realization of their fictional component corresponds to an inter-relation between the progressive movement of

the story and the stillness of an ending already captured when the narrative begins.[4] In other words, what is acquired from the beginning in these novels is precisely the fact that the aforementioned progressive movement scarcely progresses and everything has already happened, given that the narrative report essentially works through the memory's activity, and that the sense of an ending has normally been determined from the very beginning.[5]

But I quoted Poe in order to emphasize that, in Lobo Antunes, this "air of consequence" is constantly assumed but at the same time eluded, and that what remains from Poe's felicitous words is that "air," which is precisely confirmed by two subsequent terms: the "incidents" and the "tone." Both are precious tools, if conveniently conceptualized, to approach compositional philosophy in the work of António Lobo Antunes.

Let us look at some of his novels from this point of view, while trying to give at the same time some general idea about their contents. In fact, that "air of consequence" not only constitutes the organics of each novel, it also establishes a very firm relationship among the books written by the author.

In *Memória de elefante* [**Elephant's Memory*],[6] his first novel (1979), he describes a journey in the life of a young psychiatrist who has recently returned from military service in the colonial war in Africa (Angola) and has separated from his wife and daughters. After all these events, he now feels displaced in his homeland and psychologically disturbed by all of the changes and troubles that have happened in his life. The narrative deals with the morning appointments the psychiatrist has in a hospital; a meeting with a friend for lunch; two medical appointments he has as a patient in the afternoon (a treatment at the dentist's and a group therapy session with a psychoanalyst); a sudden impulse to see his daughters come out of school; a lonely dinner in a restaurant; and the evening tediously spent in the casino, playing, losing, and taking a prostitute home with him, before he finishes the night alone after all, looking at the ocean from the terrace of his apartment, in the midst of seagull excrement.

The basic narrative technique is the use of different temporal strata, mixing several moments of the past with various feelings in the present, combining all of them in the unity of one day (as in Joyce's *Ulysses*). Alternating first- and third-person narrative, the narrator presents himself simultaneously as a singular individual and as the epitome of a community in which individuals are oppressed by an ideological and political system that leads them to act against their convictions and feelings. Childhood memories and eagerness to

write are the only escapes from the pervasive sentiment of senselessness and loneliness experienced in the novel.

Published only a few months later, in 1979, *Os cus de Judas* [*South of Nowhere*] again portrays the same social situation as the previous novel. It presents a similar narrator, now telling a woman he casually meets in a bar the incredible and terrible experience of his participation in the colonial war, far away from his family, where he observed the oppression (in which he too participated) inflicted upon everybody and everything in Angola, both the inhabitants and the amazing landscape described in all its grandeur, and even the Portuguese soldiers sent there to fight a war without their being conscious of how they were used as tools for perpetuating the regime's erroneous intents. This dialogue is in fact a monologue, given that the woman, significantly enough, never speaks (in his talking, the narrator makes constant use of the conventional marks of dialogue, implying some possible utterances on the interlocutor's part, but these are never included in the discourse). This monologue, then, takes place after the main character's return to Portugal from military service in Africa, and the diegetical organization of time and space is similar to that in *Memória de elefante*, although the enunciative procedures (continuous talking, presupposing dialogue) are completely different.

In some respects, these two novels are intricately bound together and complement one another, for example, in the formal disposition of the contents, with a very elaborate sense of composition, as well as in the centrality of some topics. Two such central topics are medicine in *Memória de elefante* (in fact, as already mentioned, the narrator is both a doctor and simultaneously a patient on many occasions, which suggests that the whole system is ill, and that disease is not occasional but generalized and metaphorical) and travel, in *South of Nowhere*. In this novel, a conservative family assumes that sending a young man to war in Africa will make him grow up and acquire a sense of responsibility, whereas for the young man the return soon stops meaning returning to Portugal (in fact, he returns, but only briefly, and no longer recognizes his place and family, as if he had been living a nightmare since his first displacement to Africa), to mean instead returning to Angola, which he revisits twice, the second time taking his wife and daughter, even if only briefly.

This represents an important departure for postcolonial studies, in that the theoretical place is not only, or always, that of the colonized, but also in some cases that of the colonizer, when he effectively bonds with the place and voices concern for the oppressed in the colonized territory. Besides, in

his final return (to Portugal), the narrator feels definitely not at home. This conversation with the woman he meets in a bar takes an entire night, suggesting darkness in the mind and difficulty in discernment (as a kind of image of, and homage to, *Heart of Darkness* by Conrad), effectively placing him nowhere. Love emerges in a hymn to Sofia, an African woman he met before she was killed by the Portuguese political police. Death, on the other hand, is everywhere in the text, especially in the impressive description of the suicide of a Portuguese soldier at Mangando, brought about by despair in the war situation and by a sense of the futility of colonial fighting. Bursting through here and there, music (Beethoven and jazz) and art in general go hand in hand with the determination to write, as a way of trying to escape the meaninglessness of life.

Conhecimento do inferno [*Knowledge of Hell*] (1980) brings together two forms of violence in the author's conception: colonial war and psychiatric treatments in hospitals. The novel is built upon a car journey the narrator undertakes on his own, as he returns from holidays in the Algarve, in the south of Portugal. Softly and ironically, and again in stream of consciousness form, he criticizes the touristy side of vacations and meditates about his personal life, which strikes him as empty and wrong, after coming back from Africa and separating from his wife, and having difficulty in maintaining love affairs with women, who cannot stand his moodiness and need for freedom. However, here he deals mostly with the prospect of resuming his job as a hospital doctor, considering the world of psychiatry as a universe of horror and ignorance, and viewing madness as a kind of escape from the lack of meaning in everyday life. Notwithstanding the fact that he is alone whilst driving, he conducts an imaginary dialogue with his daughter Joana, a child, finally arriving in Lisbon, at his parents' house, late at night, to find in sleep and in the idealized image of his father the kind of peacefulness, albeit deceptive, he has been looking for.

The journey is the major component in this book, giving the sense of instability, displacement and dissatisfaction that dominates Lobo Antunes's works. Africa is still everywhere present in the protagonist's memory, mainly enabling him to describe the hospital as another type of hell, even more terrible than the colonial war, which ties in well with the "air of consequence" suggested by Edgar Allan Poe. Some compositional techniques are new in this novel, such as the succession of different characters (the patients) and, in a very special way, the progressive transformation of the narrator (and doctor) into a par-

ticular patient who suffers in his body and mind the stupidity and violence of psychiatric treatments. Facing the tragic possibility of feeling oppressed again, even in an imaginary situation, he nevertheless turns the serious meaning of his criticism and his rejection of the common, uncaring practice of medicine into burlesque by his facetious and ironical tone. Furthermore, dreams and anxieties intrude into the diegetical universe of the novel, giving form to a postcolonial sensibility and a heterogeneous discourse of communication, which reveals the desire for and impossibility of an affectionate relationship with others, and symptomatically expresses a boundless solitude.

Explicação dos pássaros [*An Explanation of the Birds*] (1983) is Lobo Antunes's first novel in which autobiography becomes a third-person narrative, and although still dealing with some personal data, a more objective and external fictional universe emerges in it. The central motif of the novel is the oscillation (on the part of the main character, Rui, a young historian) between luminous childhood memories (in particular the scene, in the woods, where his father explained to him how birds were able to fly) and the disillusionment created by present day-to-day life. Disappointment with his family, a divorce, and a new woman who appears to be unworthy of his affection drives him to suicide, with which the narrative ends in pages that resemble something of an apotheosis, both in the tragic sense of his death (near a lake, and surrounded by hundreds of birds screeching over his body) and in the monstrous perspective of life as a show, where he himself is played by a clown and all his family and friends are part of a musical grotesquely acted out:

> The audience applauded his domestic doubts as he wiped his chin on his napkin, pushed back his chair, and stood up. In the windows the fog was unraveling like a frayed garment while the boats, facing the opposite direction on the sliver of sand near the inn, were taking on faded colors, like faces waking up from long comas. Melted streaks of sunlight wandered aimlessly among the clouds, and the horizon was deserted, forsaken by the birds and the dogs.
>
> "Me explain the birds to him, imagine how absurd," his father said with a resigned grimace. "As if I, a simple businessman, could turn into a biologist just like that."
>
> On his way out he brushed the table where his mother should have been and took a large, serrated knife from the buffet with the plates and glasses while the dwarf, suddenly lit by a violent lavender spotlight, bawled out:
>
> "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, distinguished audience, please be so

> kind as to take a moment and observe the terrible suicide weapon: there's no trick, no sleight of hand, no gimmick." (221-22)

But Lobo Antunes's style remains, and more and more the alternative presence of a narrative first person, which is related to the character, and a third person, which evokes a more distant narrator, tend to merge into one single level of the enunciative process. Besides, the entanglement of different coordinates of space and time transforms the stream of consciousness into a syncretic view of different perspectives on fictional situations, giving voice to different characters, without clear indications as to their identity. Furthermore, the multiplicity of times, places, speeches, and thoughts appears as the impossibility of determining which direction to take in life—the futility of any project, for death will put an end to all of them. As it happens, here, too, the composition is based on a journey undertaken by the narrator and his wife, as they drive to attend a conference outside of Lisbon, when at the last moment they change plans and decide to stop and enjoy the weekend near the lake. The detour clearly appears as a process, just as joy for this couple turns out to mean separation and committing suicide.

Fado alexandrino (1985) is the first great (and very long) novel by António Lobo Antunes.[7] Since 1990, and especially since 2000, his novels have become impressive for their length. In this, his fifth book, the multiplicity of voices and temporal levels acquire a definite structural sense. Traveling is again a main theme, but here there is no journey being undertaken; instead, there are moments of departure (already present in the first two novels) and particularly moments of arrival—the homecoming of the soldiers who fought in Africa. Thus, *Fado* deals once more with war, but this time with an entire battalion returned from Mozambique, and the colonial war is seen within the context of the political changes that occurred in Portugal in 1974, brought about by the democratic revolution of April 25. Both events are viewed from the perspective of common and apparently less significant details, with both being seen to cause the same deceptive reactions, and considered often in a ridiculous and ironic way.

This is a peculiar attitude on Lobo Antunes's part; he differs from the majority of Portuguese intellectuals, who generally applaud this historical upheaval, in his attempts to survey its various facets. And death, as in the preceding novel, is the main theme—not only death at war and through general destruction, but also the havoc it wreaks on returning soldiers, who lose

their zest for life, assume arbitrary attitudes, and even go as far as committing murder. More precisely, the members of the returned battalion meet regularly after April 25 for a convivial dinner, in order to keep in touch and to have fun. The entire narrative is built, to great effect, upon the cross-conversations between members of the battalion during this dinner, and particularly between four of them, who talk to each other and, more respectfully, to a fifth member, the captain.

This kind of polylogue has now become the hallmark of Antunes's work: the mix of spatial and temporal levels with the intersection of voices. Life's continuity in a way erases the manifest importance of war (which at a deeper compositional level is actually emphasized) and the problematic importance of the revolution, which they tend to criticize, as representatives of an army that tried to keep a colonial empire as late as the second half of the twentieth century. On the other hand, murder returns at the end of the evening, when one of the four main characters is killed by accident, and, even worse, as a joke. Thus, suddenly, all the horror of war (as in Conrad) is revealed at the end of the novel's six hundred pages, by this unexpected process of deviation. Deviation and erasure will be the determinant in the composition of Antunes's subsequent novels, creating implausible "tones" that make the difference in the composition of the narrative.

Auto dos danados [*Act of the Damned*] (1986) continues to deal with the democratic revolution, presented from the point of view of those against whom this revolution was made: major landowners, landlords, wealthy and privileged families. But death is here too, polarizing the action once more in a journey undertaken by a member of one such family, who travels in order to be present at his grandfather's death. However, death, here, is not viewed as a form of destruction, but rather as a normal contingency of life, representing, in a symbolic way, the protracted death of the political regime (Salazar's, and then Caetano's dictatorship, before 25 April 1974), and also the hypocrisy and cupidity manifested by family members. This is violent criticism against the dictatorship, and yet Lobo Antunes portrays the character of the dying patriarch with traits of dignity and honor, although not failing to present as well all of his despotism and heavy-handed oppression. What is most impressive in this novel is the meanness and contemptibility of most of the family members, who try to gain profit from the old man's will and could not care less about the state of his health.

This is poetically conveyed by drawing a parallel with a bullfight taking

place at the same time (during festivities in the country town where the landlord lives), with the patriarch and the bull dying simultaneously, one in the family mansion, the other in the bull-ring, accompanied by music and by the screams of people who enjoy the show, as the family enjoys the grandfather's death. This entire ambiance is provided in terms of pathos, parody and burlesque. Art and spectacle (music, film, dance, etc.) are present in this book (in some of the narrator's references and in certain episodes), not only as an element of imagery but also as the basis for compositional concerns. But what remains most striking is the attitude of cruelty and fear that prevails in the characters and drives most of them to express common, lowly dreams and feelings poetically:

> I remember that it was almost night, for they had already turned on the lights and there was silverware jangling in the kitchen. In the dark of the hallway werewolves darted through the olive trees, along the bank of the Guadiana River and past the boats of the drowned fisherman, and I cowered under the sheets, in spite of the heat, so as not to hear the fig tree that kept creaking in the yard, so as not to hear the voices of the grown-ups downstairs, suddenly cruel like gigantic prehistoric birds, trying to peck out my eyes as if they were cherries. One of these days I'll ask you for the key to the mansion and take you on the bus to Alentejo, to visit the village, the castle, the cemetery, the room where the electric train tracks are rusting away, the bed where my grandfather died seven summers ago, my secrets, my fears, the hand-carved angels and the copper sun that blinds the stray dogs on the steps of the church. Yes, I'll take you to that expired land where the clock hands are paralysed, but don't be surprised, when the cemetery is reduced to an indefinite polygon and the shadows of trees stretch out on the ground like sleeping arms, if then, without warning, I squat under the heavy old dining table to hide from the ghosts of the photographs. (129-30)

As naus [*The Return of the Caravels*] (1988) is a very peculiar book. Focusing on the period of Portuguese maritime discoveries, Lobo Antunes turns some of the great navigators (Gama, Cabral and others, as well as King Manuel) into the main characters of his book, but producing two enormous reversals in this historical situation: first, he deals with them as if they were living in the twentieth century, with behaviors and ideas belonging to both periods, thus mixing past and present, which results in parody and humor. Secondly, he does not refer to their glorious departures for the great voyages of discovery or to spectacular arrivals in unknown lands

(which was the common way of celebrating the navigators under Salazar, in a perpetual celebration of the past and as a way to reinforce the notion that colonialism was acceptable and admirable); rather, he points out the unexpected and sometimes erroneous side of their return, miserable and downtrodden, which results in a literary satire and an intense rejection of imperial ideology.

The author here continues with his characteristic technique of taking one character in each chapter, as in the previous three novels (and as is also the case in subsequent works), but he also develops his procedure for mixing voices, places and times, disfiguring both the historical and the present circumstances. Thus he composes one of the most interesting books we can read according to a postmodern sensibility and to postcolonial insights. Hybridism is here not only a perspective on fiction developed by postcolonial studies, but, more importantly, it is a process of composing narrative according to some patterns of postmodernism, actually going beyond them and reaching original results and poetical effects.

Tratado das paixões da alma [**Treatise on the Passions of the Soul*] (1990) is the first volume in a trilogy of sorts, which has been called the Benfica Trilogy, because although the three volumes are independent from each other, they constitute a sequence focusing on some particular Lisbon suburbs. This does not exclude, as always in Lobo Antunes's work, the fact that the plot also refers to other parts of Portugal, and even other parts of the world, with the corresponding shifts in time, irregularly rendered by memory and as the result of interference by different and multiple characters. Childhood and friendship are central to this novel's organization. The plot revolves around a judge prosecuting a political criminal, who happened to be the protected child of a rich family, for whom the judge's father once worked as a gardener. Thus, both men were close childhood friends but became distant as time went on. The novel addresses questions of social and professional success, as well as political deviation, concentrating on criminal attitudes institutionally assumed by the police and central administration. The intensity of human affections is the ultimate effect brought about by diverse storylines in the organization of the plot. Thus, the rich boy, presently an outcast, is murdered with the painful connivance of the judge, who also ends up being murdered because of his obvious understanding and compassion for his childhood friend's attitudes.

The second volume of this trilogy is *A ordem natural das coisas* [*The*

Natural Order of Things] (1992), one of the most beautiful and devastating novels written by this author. Loneliness is the keyword in this text, where changes in contemporary Portuguese history are viewed from various sides of the political spectrum. The novel emphasizes once again the human component of wickedness and suffering, and the general feelings of uneducated people who are unable to distinguish between right and wrong moral positions in complex social situations. They are presented to the educated or at least to those in positions of leadership (as was already the case, for instance, in *Act of the Damned*) as the cruelest of all characters. The reader will be moved by the solitude of an elderly man who is in love with an ill young woman who shares his bed but refuses to give him love; or by the ludicrous decisions by a former member of the political police who considers the democratic revolution as a mere inconvenience in his everyday life; or by the story of a girl who grows up imprisoned in a loft because she was born out of wedlock, or that of a poor woman who lives with the constant memory of her seducer, a man who used to run a cinema and had sex with her in the woods, by the seaside, teaching her both physical pleasure and the feeling of being deserted:

> rockroses, so many rockroses, "my heart's desire, I love you" [...]
>
> not rockroses, not broom shrubs, but flowers, flowers, red flowers, blue flowers, white flowers, I think magnolias, I think marigolds, I think daisies, flowers, flowers, ribbons, and bows with silver and gold letters, flowers, flowers like I'd never seen, the rockroses were later in Esposende, the rockroses were next to the sea, in February when the movies from the collapsible cinema blended with the waves and your body got up from mine, "See you later," with a cigarette in your mouth, [...]
>
> rockroses rockroses rockroses rockroses rockroses rockroses rockroses, the juice of my thighs, the blood of my thighs on the rockroses. (112-16)

We must emphasize that "the air of consequence" singled out by Poe is here achieved by a very specific compositional strategy, where repetition and alternation combine with deviation and obsession, and where details result from shattered images. Such images stem directly from memory, and they become "incidents" in the plot by being incorporated in the whole ambiance of the story, that is, by assuming the general "tone" of the writing. This writing deals simultaneously with society, culture, desire and neglect, and nature, but primarily with words, a set of words chosen out of a myriad of possibilities in the dictionary and in grammatical usage, in order to signify particular

affective human insights and isolated concerns, with the very isolation they presuppose for each life and soul.

This trilogy ends with *A morte de Carlos Gardel* [**The Death of Carlos Gardel*] (1994), which further develops the sense of solitude and shattered perceptions of life and the world that we have seen before. Here, a young man is dying from a drug overdose, in desperation over his parents' divorce and following successive disappointments with many failures in their attempts to rebuild their lives. Each member of the family comes to the hospital to see him and later leaves, contemplating the waste that his death constitutes. The poetics of composition turns each of them into a kind of single, abandoned heart and body, as the young man was, and a center for decentered perspectives on life, uncertain, erroneous, and ultimately empty. At the moment of his death, the young man feels as happy as if he were singing, and, curiously enough, the book is composed around some of Carlos Gardel's (the Argentinean dancer and singer) tangos. Here, song acquires the sense of existence, mixing joy with pain, and even fiction, given that Gardel is somehow resurrected in a parody that makes music become ordinary and irrelevant. Human life thus seems to be, in a postmodern conception of absurdity, a mere incident in the ordinary environment.

O manual dos inquisidores [*The Inquisitors' Manual*] (1996) further develops narrative techniques already put into practice in the previous trilogy, and it initiates another series of three books which are decisive for the recognition of António Lobo Antunes as a master of contemporary fiction. In particular, a different conception of the novel emerges here, which relates composition and the complex perception of time and space with a delicate sense of verbal expression. The entire text is organized as a map of different kinds of discourse, according to characters, to different types of speech, to specific periods in time, or even places. Here again, semantic concerns focus on political change, mainly as to the way in which such changes affect social and human relationships, for example, the progressive isolation of Francisco, a landowner on a farm near Lisbon, and his son, João, who appears to be a secondary character but in fact turns out to be the protagonist. So, too, do many other characters initially appear to be secondary, only to subsequently become subjects of the narrative. This is especially the case with the mother, Isabel, one of Antunes's most impressive female creations. She is barely and discreetly present in the narrative, but by her absence she dominates the ambiance of the text, its "tone," with an elegiac and nostalgic aura. The conflict between

father and son is central to this novel, and it disseminates agonistic impulses over most of the other relations between characters, including oppressive class relations (economic and sexual, between the landlord and his employees) and some parodic intra-familiar behaviors, such as those created by lies in the family and the companies run by relatives. But the heart of the narrative is located in a very subtle procedure consisting of a kind of inquiry to which some of the characters give their answers; and that is the drawing up of various reports, supposing the entity of a writer or at least of someone taking notes, that makes up the book we read.

O esplendor de Portugal [**The Splendor of Portugal*] (1997) reveals the author's virtuosity in the arrangement of progressive levels of time and different places—both in Angola, before and after that country's independence, and in Lisbon, where the grown-up children of Portuguese settlers return to escape possible acts of revenge on the part of the Angolans against their former colonizers. A woman, Isilda, tries to keep her family home near Luanda, and recalls the glamour of the colonial past at the same time as she wonders about the future of her children—two boys and a girl whom she has sent back to Portugal after the 1974-75 political changes. All of the fictional situations, in both countries, are experienced around a precise moment of enunciation, Christmas Eve in 1995, with characters' lives developing on one side (Angola) from 1987 until 1995, and on the other (Portugal), concentrating around this narrative present in 1995. The symbolism of the birth of a nation is clear, with all the conservative connotations here implied by the reference to Griffith's film, and conveying a precise meaning of renewal, which mainly implies destruction of the old ideals associated with the devastation of the land due to the war in Africa, and the inability and incapacity for living revealed by Isilda's children transferred to Portugal. The crucial meaning of this novel lies in the depiction of the sense of displacement, as well as other components of a postcolonial sensibility.

Exortação aos crocodilos [**Exhortation to the Crocodiles*] (1999) also deals with concerns about the Portuguese social and political situation over the past two decades, focusing on acts of terrorism carried out by right-wing extremists. However, the narrative does not dwell on the conflict of ideas; instead, it examines ordinary characters unable to understand the real meaning of what they are doing. This then presents an obvious deviation, both in terms of alienation and in terms of writing techniques, which points toward a decentered narrator appearing for the first time in António Lobo Antunes's

work. In fact, there is no narrator in this text, and the four main characters, all women (Mimi, Fátima, Simone and Celina) and all behaving submissively to males and resenting that submission, develop complementary versions of the same story, which revolves around terrorist attacks carried out much more for psychological than ideological reasons. One of Lobo Antunes's specific stylistic procedures is central in this novel, namely the transferring of human feelings to objects, and also to plants and sometimes animals. This includes also the transferring of actions and reactions to be expected from humans, which here find expression in some elements of the environment, such as birds, trees, flowers, and pieces of furniture or mere small objects. This means that Lobo Antunes's writing is moving more and more towards a chain of verbal propositions, instead of representing the common world by direct description or by the accepted rules of organization of possible worlds in fiction. Moreover, the verbal chain thus constituted in his novels is never a formalistic construction referring to a kind of empty meaning; on the contrary, it is a constantly interrupted series of living details of observations or actions, and even of feelings, deviated from human sensibility and therefore creating an impression of the senselessness of life, or of the lifeless everyday behavior of ordinary people.

The general devices we have been pointing out in Lobo Antunes's novels are curiously present also in some small texts the writer has been producing regularly for many years, to be published in magazines and other periodicals, which he calls his chronicles. These chronicles have been collected in two books, the first entitled *Livro de crónicas*, (1998), and the second *Segundo livro de crónicas* (2002). It is worthwhile to analyze these books, in order to examine how autobiography is always more or less present in Antunes's evocations of impressions of this or that, and particularly the way in which fiction interferes constantly in what appears to be mere autobiographical data. One may say, as the author himself writes in his first novel, that childhood is a theme over which his later existence develops multiple and monotonous variations (*Memória* 27). But what the chronicles reveal is that some episodes the reader is prepared to interpret as autobiographical are in fact mere fictional constructs, nevertheless leaving open the possibility that they may have been inspired by biographical events.

Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura [**Do Not Go So Fast into That Dark Night*] (2000) is precisely a book in which indecision, deviation and procedures of transfer are central, in a new way of composing fiction with

which Lobo Antunes has begun to experiment, and which he has developed in his latest novels. It inaugurates a series of books with particularly long titles, taken from poems and imaginary or literary phrases, and where representation and imagery lose their usual fictional characteristics to become short, impressive details, flashes of verbal expression, transferred subtle feelings and reduced, "pointillist" rhetorical recurrences. The entire novel stems from the idea of disease and death (that of a cheerful relative—a father, a wife) viewed as the symbolic night of absence of knowledge, or of the naïve ignorance that allows young people to progress toward understanding and love. Maria Clara, the main character, is a young girl who tries to poke into family secrets and to discover the as yet unknown appeal of her body; she writes a kind of a diary that provokes the narrator's report. On the whole, the text develops the first pages of Genesis, bringing into itself the inspirations and principles of the essential book of Christian tradition, the Bible, and viewing common existence as the real possibility for whatever sacred events one may be prepared to accept.

Que farei quando tudo arde? [*What Can I Do When Everything's on Fire?*] (2001) continues with this general project by means of a plot which this time deals with a supposedly marginal matter, the life of homosexuals and transvestites. The question of indecision is again crucial, not only as to signification (the main protagonist, Paulo, tries to understand the identity of his father, a transvestite who abandoned his mother, leaving her to take up alcohol and prostitution) but also in expression. In fact, recurrences and fragmentation of discourse become even more frequent than in the previous novels. And the general interrogative attitude (present in the very title) leads to an observation of the multiplicity of people and situations, in what might be described as literature of manners, but it is ultimately an appeal from the human soul for the practice of writing to be seen as a possibility of knowledge (Paulo takes notes in order to understand himself and his family) and a prayer to a common God—as if it were possible for God to be one of us, to give us personal advice, and to appease human perplexities and sorrows (in a wonderful and unexpected chapter, Paulo goes upstairs to a loft where God lives in squalid conditions due to his poverty and in a frail state of health, and asks him about his father's nature). The anxiety of burning means here rebellion and destruction, and curiously enough it establishes a connection between this book and some aspects of the first three novels by the author, as well as with *The Inquisitor's Manual*, simultaneously revealing an interest in

different forms of eroticism and the spiritual search for survival.

Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo [**Good Afternoon to Things Down Here Below*] (2003) is a book where many things are burning too. The novel recalls a love for Africa and the unhappiness which results from the devastation imposed on the land and its inhabitants—evoking, in several respects *O esplendor de Portugal.* Postcolonial concerns come to the fore once more, since the family that this novel focuses on includes black, white and mixed-blood people. The colonial war is gone but neocolonialism has replaced it, particularly in the agonistic attitudes pitting members of the family against each other. Diamond smugglers now replace the soldiers of the colonial period, but political intentions are viewed as new economic trends and interests leading to a corrupt regime that is encouraged by the ex-colonizer. The plot revolves around a Portuguese secret agent sent to Angola to kill a diamond smuggler, but he ends up being involved in a complex family dispute, which includes love, death and crime. Feelings of sorrow overwhelm the agent, who stays there waiting for another secret agent sent to meet him. The former does not know that the latter's mission is to kill him and to make sure that all of this business is kept secret. One more episode will be repeated in a similar manner, hinting at the cruelest side of European exploitation in Africa, which knows no boundaries and allows for no unexpected renewals, even today. The importance of this novel derives from the fact that António Lobo Antunes here reaches the highest degree of compositional complexity, based on extremely sober verbal expression, banishing adjectives and diverse forms of qualification, omitting verbs, interrupting arguments and reasoning, reducing sentences, and insisting again and again on the sameness of the thoughts and words, as obsessive fictional components, in order to emphasize the otherness of human behaviors, the unacceptability of certain situations, the strangeness of attitudes and the rebelliousness of human desire suppressed by destruction and death.

Eu hei-de amar uma pedra [**I Shall Love a Stone*] (2004) still relies on this novelistic ambiance. Although the overall structure becomes formally irregular (in the number of chapters and the length of each part), stillness prevails in the composition of single sentences and in the tentative moderation of intensive meanings. Moreover, the love story, which is the basis of the "fabula," is organized within the plot in order to avoid tensions or disruptions, and all of the chapters are built around the same situations of discourse, which create homogeneity in fiction: photographs, in the first part; medical

appointments, in the second; social gatherings, in the third. Only in the last part, made up of narratives, does the novel become dynamic, with the leitmotiv of a lady with a beautiful hat running on the waterfront establishing a connection between all of the reports presented by the characters, who are finally manifesting themselves. Love and the stone, revealing a potentially dynamic attitude, but remaining pure intent and desire, let us recall, are already there in *Memória de elefante,* the first of the author's novels, where "pathos" stems from love and war, turned dramatic separation and restless peace, and where his compositional philosophy already appears as a poetics of the novel: "uttering dry and exact words, as if they were like stones" (*Memória* 105).

Once again, in Lobo Antunes's work, fiction represents a still way of viewing facts and events, and all the living effect passes on to situations which are incarnated by characters, sentences, and mainly by words—sometimes by words that have been erased, leaving us to try and guess ones that they might have said had they been present in the text. As if a novel were in fact an entire world, a world made of words; and as if it could only exist, and acquire its form, and breath, through the friction produced by these words, and by the stillness (or the alarm) of the pauses between them.

3. A Poetics of Fictional Narrative: Writing Distortion and Erasure

At the end of *The Inquisitors' Manual* we read:

> at an intersection of two narrow streets we heard music playing on a windup phonograph in a shack ravaged by war and rain surrounded by other shacks ravaged by war and rain [...]
> 'Burn all this crap to the ground'
> the agents [...] brought cans from the jeep, uncapped the cans, doused me with kerosene, tossed a lit match, and I started to burn, I swear I started to burn [...] and the corpses of things burning, the horrible, mutilated corpses of stoves burning [...] so please tell my idiotic son [...]
> how can I say this, how can I make it clear, please tell my idiotic son that I may not have been but that, tell him that I may have made mistakes but that, tell my idiotic son, do you hear, tell my idiotic son [...]
> please don't forget to tell my idiotic son that in spite of everything I [...] (429-31)

Burning a territory for unfair political reasons and for economic interests

amounts to an unforgivable engagement with history, and that is what Francisco, the landowner in *The Inquisitors' Manual*, feels. That is why at the end of the novel the fire is metaphorically displaced from its object and is transferred to burning Francisco himself. Feeling guilty for his actions in the past, he knows that he has neglected his son, and he tries to speak to him now, when he is dying, or at least he tries to pass on a message to him, when it is already too late and the end occurs—the end of his life and the end of the novel. Thus we can observe in the text techniques of deviation (concerning situations and objects), distortion (constituting anamorphosis) and erasure (which can consist of ellipses, in incomplete sentences or in literal gaps in the narrative discourse). Writing secrets or silences, writing the absence of expressed words, is one of the most remarkable skills of António Lobo Antunes, who invents in his novels a kind of poetics of distortion and erasure.

As to the historical guilt being attributed to certain individuals, one has to consider the particular way in which this author deals with the past, namely the so-called glorious maritime discoveries, that is, the beginning and the basis for colonialism. Working consistently with the technique of distortion, Lobo Antunes elaborates an intensively violent parody of this period in *The Return of the Caravels*, as we have already mentioned; but here we must add that he also works with the technique of erasure, giving us only part of the actions of the navigators he takes up as his main characters (Gama, Cabral, King Manuel, etc.), and always insisting on the conjunction of ridicule and praise, and mostly mixing two time periods (the sixteenth and twentieth centuries), thus creating a type of impossibility that fits in with his general preference for derision, hybridism, the bizarre, the grotesque, and diverse forms of negativity. This is how he presents Vasco da Gama:

> Everything had happened to him in life, from discovering India and cleaning up the diarrhea and vomit of my dying brother Paulo da Gama with my own hands to helping seal up with stearin plugs the coffin of the father of some poor devil who was voyaging to the realm in the hold of a ship after the revolution in Lisbon, from playing cards with my heart not in the game until, as now, coming to live in this place in the run-down neighborhood between Madre de Deus and Chelas that parliament unanimously voted to award me along with a medal and a diploma as payment for my services to the nation and where the king Dom Manuel could come to pick me up on Sunday morning for drives in his car to Guincho. (151)

Multiple voices, facts and invention, parody and fake are some of the forms of general negativity in Lobo Antunes's work (negativity as a poetic construct which challenges fictional representation), definitely trying to underscore the impression of senselessness (in his first books), and the devastation of the land and the human soul in most of his writings.

From this perspective, negativity can be seen to have three components: interdiction (the construction of the sentence, as we have already seen, indicates the suggestive presence of gaps and the constant need to stop writing because the character has to stop thinking); crime (semantically present in war, destruction, punishment, hostility, wicked attitudes, tricks, defamatory statements, and murder); and impossibility (which is revealed in the slippery way in which serious purposes become jokes, or tragic situations become parody and burlesque). Negativity thus involves most of the procedures of distortion, derision and erasure we have already mentioned.

On the other hand, deviation and distortion can be understood to be based, beginning with Antunes's first novels, on different modalities adopted for the conjunction of semantic and ideological concerns with rhetoric and stylistic devices. Recalling the whole of his work, it becomes clear that in his first novels the author is interrogating the past, himself, his family, his circle, and his readers, in a modality of interpellation that makes his writing full of life and disquietude, torrential and impetuous. From *Fado alexandrino* to *The Return of the Caravels*, the modality is much more that of considering deviation in life, history, narrative, or through misunderstanding and crime—mixing both in a way that juxtaposes tragedy and burlesque, a procedure Lobo Antunes still adopts in his latest novels. The first trilogy emphasizes deviation (by detective novel techniques, in *Tratado das paixões da alma*; by insisting on crime, in *The Natural Order of Things;* and by escape, which here means drugs, disappearance and death, in *A morte de Carlos Gardel*). The second trilogy (from *The Inquisitors' Manual* to *Exortação aos crocodilos*) seems to ask questions *for* the narrative, and asks them as to the possibility of love, the exercise of power, and the convention of family, and, in the latest books, António Lobo Antunes develops the strategy of silence as a kind of answer, or as the recording of the impossibility of any kind of answer. This can be revealed through darkness in *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura*, fire in *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, farewell in *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo,* or oblivion in *Eu hei-de amar uma pedra*. Indeed, the latter book appears to have been entirely written in order to hide what happened, or to downplay its emotional intensity, which is

nevertheless very real (the book downplays it in the writing, but it still comes through strongly in the reading).

Asking questions essentially involves the Other, and this may be the reason why questioning is a major fictional structure in most of Antunes's novels. The difficulty in fixing the boundary between speech and writing is another important work directive when we decide to interrogate these texts. When we examine them, we constantly realize that every device is meaningful, in the sense that it is always contested by another one, which may reinforce it or, on the contrary, oppose it, and it is the indecision thus created that serves as the crucial interest of all of these novels, where writing supposes erasure and every gap highlights the left out words, or the implicit ones.

In Lobo Antunes's first novels, the reader feels that everything has already happened, and that memory, as a kind of imposing world, determines the conditions of the narrative. In his later work, however, it is as if one had to guess everything, and words were subtle and light clues (although sometimes undoubtedly heavy, even sinister, and deadly) for an impossible account of an impressive existence, which we cannot fix, or apprehend, by any means. The rest is, in fact, the book, and the silence it keeps written, still staying alive.

Notes

[1] The twenty-second came out in 2010: *Sôbolos Rios Que Vão* (in English: *By the Rivers that Flow*).

[2] This translation substantially reduces the body of the text, omitting here and there a good deal of sentences.

[3] The "Benfica Trilogy" includes *Tratado das paixões da alma* [*Treatise on the Passions of the Soul*], *A ordem natural das coisas* [*The Natural Order of Things*], and *A morte de Carlos Gardel* [*The Death of Carlos Gardel*].

[4] I borrow the term "captured" specifically from a sentence by Conrad: "That notion of being captured by the incredible which is the very essence of dreams" (*Heart of Darkness*), implying that text reception partly overlaps text composition on the level of the presupposition of imagination. Moreover, Lobo Antunes manifests great admiration for Joseph Conrad's work.

[5] I am obviously referring to Frank Kermode's work, *The Sense of an Ending*.

[6] The * indicates a novel which has not yet been translated into English; tentative titles in English are given in square brackets.

[7] "Fado" is a traditional Portuguese song, and "alexandrino" refers to a particular kind of this genre of song.

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Duelo contra o império: o indivíduo e a busca da felicidade no romance *Os cus de Judas* de António Lobo Antunes

José Maurício Saldanha Alvarez

Resumo: O artigo analisa o romance *Os cus de Judas* de António Lobo Antunes como um duelo metaforizando a luta contra a ditadura salazarista e a manutenção do império colonial português na África.

"La civilisation chrétienne!
Création, Poulet! Imagination! Escroquerie! Imposture!
Tout de même! Création du grand.
Métissages! Destruction de vingt siècles, Poulet! rien d'autre! faites pour! créer pour! chaque création porte en elle-même, avec elle, avec sa naissance, sa propre fin, son assassinat."
(Céline 18)

O militar prussiano Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) escreveu que a guerra "nada mais é do que um duelo a mais vasta escala" travada entre dois oponentes que tentam "por meio da sua força física, submeter o outro à sua vontade [...] com o objetivo de forçar o adversário a executar nosso desejo" (73). A expressão "duelo" é, sem dúvida, uma metáfora eficaz. Seu emprego continuado, como escreveu Searle, responde "a uma necessidade semântica," sendo um tema recorrente na cultura ocidental, aonde subsiste uma antiga linhagem

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 45-60.
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de confrontos individuais travados entre uma divindade e homens comuns (133). O deus primordial da mitologia helênica, *Cronos,* era um pai castrador que terminou abatido por um dos seus filhos, Zeus. Este, por sua vez tornado "pai" supremo, enfrentou e derrotou Prometeu. Encontramos na *Odisséia* um outro duelo, travado desta vez entre o herói humano Odisseus, ou Ulisses, e o deus marinho *Poseidon*. Na tradição judaico-cristã, igualmente ocorreram embates entre Deus e alguns homens. *Javé,* enraivecido, enviou um anjo para que, em seu lugar, lutasse contra Jacó. Também Jesus Cristo enfrentou Seu Pai no Horto das Oliveiras. Nestes relatos, como demonstrou Sigmund Freud, há uma reação violenta dos filhos contra um pai simbólico e castrador, que, apoiado numa panóplia simbólica, os impediu de se tornarem indivíduos com direito à busca da felicidade (Freud 157).

No romance intitulado *Os cus de Judas*, de António Lobo Antunes, realizaremos o que Michel de Certeau (1925-1986) definiu como uma operação de caça furtiva (*Invenção* 264). Trata-se de uma narrativa que contextualiza um duelo travado entre dois adversários assimétricos. De um lado está posta e servida a ideologia do poder imperial salazarista e a ditadura da mesmice dos *topos* de senso comum fabricado pelas elites (Sousa Santos 60). Do outro, se dispõe, entediado em seu mal estar moderno, um indivíduo duplicado. Médico psiquiatra e oficial da reserva, foi convocado para os quadros supletivos —outra duplicação—do exército português. Este romance, nos elementos referenciais que dão suporte à verossimilhança com um relato autobiográfico, integra, como assinala Riffaterre, um fenômeno discursivo que pode tornar-se uma modalidade de *diegése* (2). O contexto espacial e temporal onde a narrativa transita é antes de tudo o de um relato de viagem realizada na direção do espaço da subjetividade do autor, tão marcada pela guerra. Ele, como obra, resulta da faculdade de inventar, assim como ocorre no cinema, onde boa parte de um filme histórico é freqüentemente uma invenção (Ranciére 35). Sugerindo a existência de uma outra duplicação, Certeau considerou que "Todo relato é um relato de viagem—e é também—uma prática do espaço" (*Escrita* 200). Consideramos que o escritor, em nossa análise, aparecerá sob a denominação de narrador-personagem. Esta definição é sugerida pelas lições de Benjamin, para quem "a experiência propicia ao narrador a matéria narrada, quer esta experiência seja própria ou relatada [...]. Escrever um romance significa chegar ao ponto máximo do incomensurável na representação da vida humana" (66). Ao regressar da guerra africana para Portugal, o narrador-personagem ostentava as marcas indeléveis de uma experiência histórica; his-

tória, pensada como a definiu o grego Tucídides, ou seja: uma aquisição para sempre. Para o narrador-personagem, portanto: "O medo de voltar ao meu país comprime-me o esôfago, porque, entende, deixei de ter lugar onde fosse, estive longe demais, tempo demais para tornar a pertencer aqui, a estes outonos de chuvas e de missas, estes demorados invernos despolidos [...]. Flutuo entre dois continentes que me repelem, nu de raízes, em busca de um espaço branco onde ancorar" (Antunes 222).

A guerra colonial portuguesa significou toda uma experiência histórica coletivamente reprimida (Madureira 29). Uma geração inteira que se opôs à formulação ideológica salazarista e imperial foi abafada, interditada de se expressar em textos. Para nós, este vácuo historiográfico foi coberto após o 25 de Abril pela literatura portuguesa desde então. *Os cus de Judas,* dentro desta fortuna crítica, adquire o significado intrínseco de uma contra-narrativa libertadora; ao mesmo tempo se tornou uma assassina da ficção discursiva nascida de uma longa linhagem de opressão ideológica.

Nos finais dos anos de 1950, o mundo moderno sofreu transformações radicais dentro do jogo da bipolaridade da arena política internacional. Ao longo desta época tão crucial quanto repleta de tensões, a juventude européia recuperava-se do trauma da Segunda Guerra Mundial. Redescobriam a vida, o bem-estar, o próprio corpo, o amor e o direito à felicidade. Era um tempo de desfazer-se das heranças ultrapassadas. Nesta direção, os mais importantes Estados europeus, como a França e a Grã-Bretanha, inaugurais da era moderna, liquidaram progressivamente seu acervo colonial. O império português, porém, recusou-se a reconhecer o primado semântico da realidade, refugiando-se na mística da sua narrativa nacional. Nas guerras, porém, a verdade parece ser sempre a primeira baixa a ser computada, e, por mais gritante que seja, ela não é vista nem sentida, a não ser, tardiamente (Virilio 33). O país, por causa desta recusa, sofreu forte revés no ano de 1960, quando a Índia, recém independente e agressiva, invadiu *manu militari* os enclaves portugueses de Goa, Diu e Damão. Na África, os insurgentes evoluíram do terrorismo para um conflito de guerrilhas, que causou perdas humanas elevadas para um país de população diminuta como Portugal (Gallagher 42). A prolongada guerra colonial, cujo custo financeiramente elevado, consumidor de vidas e de felicidade, determinou o colapso do regime salazarista, que defendeu com teimosia obsessiva a posse de suas colônias. Para Holland, o império só terminou graças a uma "revolution from the metropolis," ou, melhor, com "the inevitable consequence of the successful coup against the

dictatorship of President Antonio Salazar in Lisbon, during April 1974" (Holland 239).

Nos primórdios da conflagração, diante da escassez de quadros militares profissionais, o exército português e as autoridades salazaristas convocaram milhares de jovens reservistas. Raciocinaram assim: sendo opositores, vão morrer combatendo a rebelião; se partidários do império esta é a ocasião de defendê-lo, confundindo de cambulhada com a noção de pátria as províncias ultramarinas e sua representação no sedutor mapa cor-de-rosa. A esta tonitruante convocação da narrativa recitada, Lobo Antunes respondeu ironicamente, produzindo um jogo semântico que recorda as construções futuristas de Carlo Carrá: "Angolaénossa senhor presidente e vivapátria claro que somos e com que apaixonado orgulho os descendentes dos Magalhães dos Cabrais e dos Gamas e a gloriosa missão que garbosamente desempenhamos" (127). Quando a máquina militar portuguesa consolidou-se nos campos de batalha ultramarinos, a guerra tornou-se para a oficialidade superior uma ocasião única de poder, com direito de vida e de morte sobre as populações. A organização hierárquica das tropas refletia o caráter senhorial da sociedade portuguesa. Enquanto os generais dispunham de gabinetes climatizados, soldados, tenentes e capitães viam seus corpos, almas e subjetividades sendo consumidos até o limite, como se fossem os protagonistas de uma nova *História trágico-marítima*.

O conflito colonial foi, portanto, um duelo travado pela tropa em condições emocionais desgastantes. A iniciativa parece sempre pertencer ao esquivo adversário, e quase sempre pertence a ele a primeira e devastadora salva na emboscada. Desta forma, salientou Walzer, "surprise is the essential feature of guerrilla war; thus, the ambush is the classic guerrilla tactic" (176). O recorte abarcado pelo romance recorda o que o jornalista francês Lucien Bodard escreveu sobre a guerra da Indochina. Foram anos "sans batailles, sans fronts, sans objectifs decisifs, sans tout ce que constitue normelement la guerre" (267). No entanto, a Guerra da Argélia travada pela França marcou profundamente o imaginário dos militares portugueses, especialmente pela leitura dos romances do francês Jean Lartéguy. Este veterano da guerra da Coréia, jornalista e escritor, desfrutava grande prestígio entre a oficialidade jovem do exército português. No prefácio de um dos seus romances mais polêmicos e festejados, intitulado *Les Centurions*, Lartéguy transcreveu uma carta da lavra de um centurião romano, que há dois mil anos atrás batia-se numa outra guerra colonial travada no mesmo solo africano. Amargurado pela ausência de um desfecho palatável e honroso, e sentindo-se um joguete nas mãos dos políticos "metropolitanos,"

queixava-se de que as tropas estavam fartas de se verem traídas, vendidas, humilhadas. Se perdessem aquela guerra, advertiu em tom profético, "alors, que l'on prenne garde à la colère des legions" (8). E foi esta cólera despeitada das legiões, que, no Portugal metropolitano, no dia 25 de abril de 1974, derrubou do poder um salazarismo já moribundo desde a morte inglória de seu ditador.

O conflito colonial na África foi uma experiência tão traumática que alterou a auto-imagem e a inserção no mundo do narrador-personagem. Ele sentiu-se: "Tão esquisito, entende, que me pergunto às vezes se a guerra acabou de facto ou continua ainda, algures em mim, com seus nojentos odores de suor, e de pólvora, e de sangue, os seus corpos desarticulados, os seus caixões que me aguardam" (Antunes 197). Por que uma guerra distante afetaria tanto um narrador-personagem? O historiador helênico Tucídides, na introdução da sua *História da Guerra do Peloponeso*, considerou natural que os atores de um conflito amplificassem desmesuradamente sua participação. Até porque os "hombres suelen considerar siempre que la guerra que han vivido fue la más importante, y una vez esta ha concluido, sienten mayor admiración por los hechos del pasado, sin embargo, quien la juzga a la luz de los simples hechos, llegará a la conclusión de que esta ha sido la más transcendental de la historia" (43).

Diante da luta, o narrador-personagem manifestou um peculiar afastamento físico e moral. Físico, porque não foi livre para decidir, faz a guerra porque foi convocado. Seu corpo não foi livre para decidir. A sensação de afastamento corporal parece ser, também, um deslocamento moral do sujeito diante do conflito. Assim como não pediu para vir a este mundo, também não pediu para ir à guerra. Está ali obrigado, mas dela não pode fugir. A vida e a guerra, assim, despontam em sua narrativa como uma espécie de obrigação do seu estado existencial. Ele foi, como ocorreu com Hamlet, príncipe da Dinamarca, um "escravo do seu próprio nascimento" e que, por conta desta imposição da *moira*, não pode fazer "como faz a gente do povo, eleger para si" (38). Foi convocado para fazê-la como oficial miliciano já que tinha curso superior, mas também por temer o sistema, cujo braço armado e repressor, a PIDE, mostrava-se atenta, sempre a um passo de intervir como o superego do regime. Nosso narrador-personagem faz a guerra de maneira preguiçosa, hesitante, distante. Sempre que tem uma oportunidade, foge dela como fugia da prisão fascista o escritor italiano Curzio Malaparte. Para ele um intelectual não foge da prisão passando com seu corpo através das barras, prática de evasão confiada a homens brutos. Como é um indivíduo sensível, refinado e inteligente, o faz pela cabeça, foge pela imaginação.

Em outro episódio que caracteriza esse seu destacamento, o narrador-personagem não tem coragem de reunir voluntários para ir ao encontro de uma emboscada. Ele se afasta da solidariedade militar, refugiando-se em seu estatuto de médico, intelectual. Autor duplicado, ele é um homem comum, mas é também um oficial convocado. Como médico, possui a *potestas* de afastar a morte, fazer sarar os ferimentos. Como os sacerdotes—os *sacer*—do paganismo clássico, ele agiu como escreveu Benveniste, operando de forma mais efetiva a "la division entre le profane et le sacré." Também o *sacer* é duplicado, é simultaneamente augusto e maldito, capaz tanto de ser venerado como de suscitar o horror (188). Quando um soldado ensandecido ameaçou matar a todos, logra desarmá-lo e o convence—como por dotes mágicos—a se entregar. Diante desta proeza, os demais militares equivocadamente o julgaram "capaz de os acompanhar e de lutar por eles, de [os] unir ao seu ingênuo ódio contra os senhores de Lisboa" (Antunes 202). Na recusa deste acumpliciamento, nascido da camaradagem das armas, ele refuga o que Veyne denominou de "le monde de la personne," onde a pessoa se opõe ao indivíduo, "comme l'unité vivant au-delà des personages, comme le centre invisible où tout se rattache" (160). A ação contra o "fascismo provinciano" igualmente o aborrece. A militância político-partidária o desagrada, é coisa do vulgo, do populacho da arraia-miúda. Sua oposição antifascista é sua somente, assim como o tédio pertence a Hamlet.

A revolta contra o salazarismo mostrava-se difusa então, seus contornos eram indefinidos e indecifráveis. No entanto, o germe adormecido estava presente, apesar de oculto, muito embora estivesse ainda longínquo o dia que se transformaria num 25 de abril. No entanto, diante do narrador, ensaiava-se a revolução, como recitava um capitão que usava "óculos moles [e] repetia na [sua] cabeça A revolução faz-se por dentro, e [...] olhava o soldado sem cara a reprimir os vômitos que me cresciam na barriga, e apetecia-me estudar Economia, ou Sociologia, ou a puta que o pariu em Vincennes." Ao ir buscar um ferido grave, devaneia por essa história do futuro, desejoso de estar "a treze mil quilômetros dali, a vigiar o sono da [sua] filha no berço [...] queria achar-[se] em Paris a fazer revoluções no café, ou a doutorar-[se] em Londres e a falar de [seu] país com ironia horrivelmente provinciana do Eça" (Antunes 199).

Toda a estrutura ficcional foi, pois, capaz de produzir a dimensão do visível, porque ela se mostra guardiã do triplo sentido, que, segundo Certeau, emana dos "relatos (as fábulas de nossas publicidades e de nossas informações), [das] suas citações e [da] sua interminável recitação" (Certeau, *Invenção* 288). Ele também divisa neste fenômeno uma relação com as práticas modernas de

convencimento público mediante a produção das certezas, por intermédio das "*mass media,* [d]as publicidades ou [d]as reapresentações políticas." Por outro lado, um dos trabalhos realizados pela história é o de ocultar e produzir "terapias," deslocando ou mascarando "aquilo que não deve ser ocultado, mas debatido coletivamente, desmascarado, posto a nu" (292).

A história recitada foi escrita pelo aparato de poder de um dos mais precoces Estados-nação da Europa Ocidental. As monarquias portuguesas, apoiadas num clero cada vez mais nacional e em juristas saídos das universidades, redigiram uma escrita historiográfica que impôs à vida cultural nacional uma direção escatológica. Consolidando as identidades no sentido fideísta, peculiar às instituições do Antigo Regime, apagou a memória dos demais registros concorrentes. Redigiu uma narrativa histórica ficcional, baseada em mitos fabricados e que levou a nação a crer que representava—como os antigos hebreus—um povo eleito com quem Deus estabelecera um singular pacto para evangelizar o universo. Queremos crer que, desta maneira—como escreveu Eduardo Lourenço—os portugueses foram "Leccionados pela história—na medida em que ela pode leccionar uma colectividade que é uma das mais desmemoriadas que é possível conceber-se."

O regime salazarista, desejoso de legitimar-se numa época de recuperação dos arcaísmos legitimadores entre as décadas de 1920 e 1940 (donde o fascismo, com seus *jefes* e *duces*, e *Führer*, e *mare nostrum*, e terras ancestrais), confundiu sua permanência política a partir de sua origem nos mitos históricos. Estes, segundo Saraiva, são "uma forma de consciência fantasmagórica com que um povo define a sua posição e a sua vontade na história do mundo" (118). Construções da memória e da história, cristalizadas no imaginário, podem tornar-se entidades concretas apesar de seu aspecto fantasmagórico. Para Morazé, cada povo "inventa segundo sua maneira de viver, seu próprio universo do divino" (91). O resultado deste modelado da vida evidencia-se no teatro da memória do narrador-personagem, que assim se apresenta:

> Nasci e cresci num acanhado universo de crochê, crochê de tia-avó e crochê manuelino, filigranaram-me a cabeça na infância, habituaram-me a pequenez do *bibelot*, proibiram-me o canto nono dos Lusíadas e ensinaram-me desde sempre a acenar com o lenço em lugar de partir. Policiaram-me os espíritos, e em suma, reduziram-me as geografias dos fusos, a cálculos horários de amanuense cuja caravela de aportar às Índias se metamorfoseou numa mesa de fórmica com esponja em cima para molhar os selos com a língua. (Antunes 37)

Nos primórdios da guerra colonial, confrontado com a opção traumática da amputação da sua centenária herança, o salazarismo viu a questão de maneira radicalmente diversa do que ocorria com a independência das possessões da Inglaterra, sua tradicional aliada. Para Eduardo Lourenço, as colônias integravam a "missão de que Portugal fora alegadamente encarregado pelo próprio Deus, missão essa que, inspirada por valores cristãos, visava converter e civilizar os nativos, edificando novas sociedades multirraciais, que poderiam vir a ser um exemplo para o mundo inteiro." Certeau admite que uma narrativa pode tornar ficcionalmente real o simulacro, "produzido por um poder, induzindo a crer que outro acredite nele, mas sem fornecer nenhum objeto crível." As colônias não beneficiavam diretamente a esmagadora maioria do povo português, cujos padrões de vida eram singularmente espartanos. A riqueza nacional era ilusória, posto que ficcional. O sinal mais evidente, se não o único de uma eleição divina, era a guarda do império colonial. Talvez por conta deste afastamento real é que ele sempre representou um projeto de Estado e das elites. Assim, a construção do império ultramarino e sua liquidação ocorreram para a sociedade portuguesa da mesma forma: como "um fato consumado" (Lourenço 60). Da mesma maneira, Lourenço considera que os treze anos da guerra colonial parecem ter significado pouco, pois, diante dela, Portugal permaneceu num estado de inconsciência coletiva. Hayden White considera que as representações do passado são portadoras de implicações ideológicas. Neste caso, a relação de continuidade da recitação meta-histórica portuguesa pode ser auferida pelo discurso produzido por alguns historiadores educados à sombra das instituições do salazarismo. Para alguns deles, a epopéia quinhentista das navegações foi tão absorvente da energia nacional que, após esse tempo, Portugal nunca mais foi tão ele mesmo.

A narrativa recitada também permitiu denunciar os opositores do regime, os que relutavam em lutar e os que travavam sem urgências essa guerra inglória: "os senhores de Lisboa"—escreveu Lobo Antunes—"disparavam sobre nós balas envenenadas dos seus discursos patrióticos." No entanto, o narrador-personagem não reagia nem se irmanava em protesto algum. Ao contrário, ele próprio permanecia em sua "passividade imóvel," surdo às acusações, assumindo a "conformação de prisioneiro" da recitação. A partir dessa servidão voluntária, ele anela voltar à pátria, como retornarão as tropas que farão o 25 de abril. O regresso manifesta-se como um desejo de retornar ao útero da mãe, da mátria. Renascer. Voltar à esposa era voltar à origem da vida, retornar, talvez, a uma idéia de morte: "Deixe que eu volte de África para aqui e me

sinta feliz [...] o que não consigo esquecer, a violência assassina na terra prenhe da África, e tome-me dentro de você" (Antunes 203).

Ele também não reconhece o império como uma herança, recusa-se a crer no que para Bourdieu seria uma forma de poder simbólico (8). No entanto, o território o marcou a ferro como a guerra o marcou a fogo. Acusou a capital, Luanda, de "cidade colonial pretensiosa e suja de que nunca gostei." Diante dela, onde cumpria seu cativeiro militar, vocifera, ecoando um profeta irado e saudoso de sua terra:

> Não te pertenço nem me pertences, tudo em ti me repele, recuso que seja este o meu país, eu que sou homem de tantos sangues misturados por um esquisito acaso de avós de toda à parte [...] a minha terra são 89.000 quilômetros quadrados com centro em Benfica na cama preta dos meus pais, a minha terra é onde o Marechal Saldanha aponta o dedo e o Tejo deságua, obediente à sua ordem, são os pianos das tias e o espectro de Chopin a flutuar à tarde no ar rarefeito pelo hálito das visitas, o meu país, Ruy Belo, é o que o mar não quer. (Antunes 95)

Como a guerra mudou o mundo do narrador-personagem? Walter Benjamin, reportando-se às trágicas experiências da Grande Guerra, argumentou que "os indivíduos voltavam emudecidos" para suas casas. Os livros sobre o conflito resultaram pífios diante daquela "experiência real, transmitida oralmente." De retorno a Lisboa, nosso autor-narrador sentiu saudades do tempo da guerra. Como ocorreu com o Portugal das navegações, durante o tempo da guerra colonial o autor-narrador foi mais ele mesmo. Foi mais ele próprio naquela época e para sempre. No entanto, a África que povoa sua imaginação é um território inexistente na geografia real. O próprio conflito, às vezes, adquire o fantástico contorno de uma legenda inverossímil. "Porque camandro é que não se fala nisto? Começo a pensar que o milhão e quinhentos mil homens que passaram por África não existiram nunca e lhe estou contando uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar, uma história inventada." Diante de um acantonamento militar que vai se deslocar em direção ao norte, o autor-narrador é assaltado pela dor de abandonar esse chão que foi somente seu. Diz ele:

> Tento desesperadamente fixar, dizia, o cenário que habitei tantos meses, as tendas de lona, os cães vagabundos, os edifícios decrépitos da administração defunta morrendo pouco a pouco numa lenta agonia de abandono: a idéia de uma África

> portuguesa, de que os livros de História do Liceu, as arengas dos políticos e o capelão de Mafra me falavam em imagens majestosas, não passavam, afinal, de uma espécie de cenário de província a apodrecer na desmedida vastidão do espaço. (144)

Dentro da África, a representação do império. Neste constructo ficcional, o povo não podia residir. No entanto, para viver na África, era necessário recuperar fragmentos do espaço ancestral e da memória. Criar lugares parecidos com ela, assemelhados ao útero materno. Mesmo sob a forma de cenário, não importa. A arquitetura, cenário do teatro da memória, refazia a aldeia ancestral. Desta maneira, em meio à imensidão da savana africana,

> De tempos a tempos, no entanto, Portugal reaparecia sob a forma de pequenas povoações à beira da estrada, nas quais raros brancos translúcidos de paludismo, tentavam desesperadamente criar Moscavides perdidas, colando andorinhas de loiça nos intervalos das janelas ou pendurando lanternas de ferro forjado nos alpendres das portas. (38)

No império residiam os administradores, os empresários e suas negociatas, a narrativa ficcional que se desfazia diante do grito agudo da realidade. Um dia, diante de uma pobre vila africana, disparou: "O império, o mundo-que-o-português-criou são esses luchazes côncavos de fome que nos não entendem a língua. A doença do sono e o paludismo, a amebíase, a miséria." No entanto, a liquidação do império construído em séculos foi veloz. A Revolução ocorrida no dia 25 de abril de 1974 foi muito mais do que uma bem sucedida operação de Estado Maior, expressou mais do que a cólera das legiões, demonstrando que a lição da revolta do 13 de maio de 1960 em Argel tinha sido aprendida repelindo-se a solução de um *putsch* de generais isolados nas colônias (*Revista Camões* 211). Era preciso tomar o poder na metrópole. Capturar Lisboa. Conquistar o povo. Depor o regime. Para Lobo Antunes, Portugal pareceu ter renascido a partir deste episódio e, entre os escritores portugueses e seu público, pareceu mesmo ter ocorrido "une véritable réconciliation" (Antunes, *Revista Quadrante* 147). O 25 de Abril parece ter aberto para Portugal e sua cultura a porta do futuro, para a construção de uma nova identidade. Ou, talvez, como escreveu Lourenço, era chegado "o tempo de nos vermos tais como somos, o tempo de uma nacional redescoberta de nossas verdadeiras riquezas, potencialidades, carências, condição indispensável

para que algum dia possamos viver connosco mesmo com um mínimo de naturalidade" (76).

Para Certeau, a escrita significa também a possibilidade de "compor um espaço conforme a um querer," que "se articula com o corpo como em cima de uma página móvel, opaca, fugidia. Dessa articulação, o livro se tornava a experiência em laboratório, no campo de um espaço econômico demográfico ou pedagógico." O corpo nesta obra de Lobo Antunes parece despontar como uma possibilidade expressiva de características singulares, assim "como o papel usado para escrever, este corpo suporte se gasta. O que se produz como uma gestão de vida, domínio ou escrita do corpo não cessa de falar da morte em ação." Tanto os vivos como os mortos possuem uma maneira de eloqüência textual. Muitos dos seus relatos não se fazem com palavras, mas com mutilações, ferimentos, morte. Ao receber o corpo de um soldado falecido em combate, diz aos companheiros deste que não estava morto, mas "a dormir a sesta." E insistiu: "não quero que o acordem."

Na película *O encouraçado Potenkim (*1925) do cineasta russo Serguei Eisenstein, a tripulação da belonave depositou no porto da cidade de Odessa o cadáver de um tripulante morto durante a revolta contra os oficiais. Tratava-se de um morto eloqüente. Como um signo da revolução futura, sua mudez mostrou-se prenhe de previsões de liberdades inda que tardias e difusas, fluindo de sua imobilidade em putrefação para a agitação dos sonâmbulos da ditadura estalinista.

N'*Os cus de Judas*, há toda uma linguagem corporal capaz de compor uma dialética interior *versus* exterior; ou como a definiu Certeau, "um teatro rico de entradas e saídas." O narrador-personagem, porém, na dialética do duelo e desta infindável duplicação, possui dois corpos, o do militar e o civil. Este último, no entanto, é quem o liberta para o retorno à metrópole, à "mátria," num transporte pleno de lirismo: "sou paisano de novo por uns dias e viajo na geografia mansa do teu corpo, no rio da tua voz a fresca das tuas palmas." Por outro lado, seu distanciamento intelectual da guerra e das pessoas que a fazem, mostrou-se abalado pelo corpo, esta porta sensorial aberta ao toque. É no corpo que reside a falha da armadura do eu. O corpo não se pode afastar do conflito, pois ele é o alvo das balas das Kalashnikov, destroçá-lo com as minas é o objetivo do inimigo. Recorda-se do alferes Eleutério, "pequenino e enrugado," que o conduziu gentilmente ao mato, onde um dos soldados que perdeu a perna numa mina o aguardava, "ainda consciente na areia." O Alferes "pousou a mão, sem falar, no meu ombro,

e foi essa, percebe?, uma das raras vezes em que até hoje me achei acompanhado" (Antunes, *Judas* 88).

A sexualidade desponta na narrativa como um exercício de libertação onde o corpo é transformado num instrumento subversivo. Não se trata do erotismo. Mas de uma pulsão de morte através do orgasmo. Recusando-se a procriar filhos para o império e para a nação, masturba-se e por esta prática se liberta, foge pela imaginação na direção da mulher, fetichizada nas fotos como um *ersatz*: "Há onze meses que me masturbo todas as noites"—escreveu o autor-narrador—"como um puto, a tecer variações adolescentes em torno das mamas das fotografias dos cubículos das transmissões, há onze meses que não sei o que é um corpo ao pé do meu corpo."

Vista deste ângulo, parece-nos ter sido travada sob o signo da castração por parte do salazarismo. Mas ao mesmo tempo sob o signo da impotência por parte dos sujeitos, da tropa, dos soldados, do médico. Irmanados em seu cativeiro, assistem à morte de simpatizantes da guerrilha. Os diabos da PIDE davam vazão aos seus instintos que eram apenas instintos maus, executando prisioneiros, torturando, ameaçando. "O bilhete para Luanda," eufemismo designador do *coup de grace*, tiro dado na cabeça do prisioneiro diante da cova aberta por ele mesmo. A mulher violentada é uma metáfora da África, também ela vencida e usada—para saciar desejos alheios. Todas elas são inúmeras, eventuais, transitórias. Não são sujeitos, mas reduzem sua presença a cópulas realizadas de maneira improvisada, num arroubo ou num espasmo de desejo. A defloração constante, a feminização do outro parece esconder a emasculação insistente do seu próprio corpo, obrigado à masturbação ou à cópula oculta.

Os espaços imensos da África obrigam as tropas a um nomadismo combatente. O seu inimigo é nômade da guerrilha. Em determinados momentos, a narrativa relata o percurso incessante, uma vagabundagem espacial, o deslocar diante de um mapa cuja toponímica oscila entre nomes portugueses e de origem africana. Também a escrita de uma hagiografia se pratica num percurso. A vida de um santo se reduz ao peregrinar numa geografia sensível e necessária com seu corpo corruptível de homem e a alma imortal que se debate para chegar até Deus. O texto, juntamente com seu herói, circula em torno dos lugares, mostrando nos espaços e nos percursos o que não se pode dizer nem substituir. Portanto, explicou Certeau: "Onde o mapa demarca, o relato faz uma travessia. O relato é 'diegése.' Como diz o grego para designar a narração: instaura uma caminhada (guia) e passa através (transgride). O espaço de operações que ele pisa é feito de movimentos, é topológico, relato

das deformações de figuras, e não é tópico, definidor de lugares" (Certeau, *Invenção* 215).

A narração da vastidão africana desponta como diferentes maneiras de representar a ordem que se impõe a ela. Nas descrições, detecta-se uma intensificação do registro, evidencia-se como uma cena de crime continuado, denota uma "exacerbação" do fazer, do agir, do relatar. Além disso, deve-se lutar contra a manipulação da incerteza, estratégia empregada com habilidade pelos generais, transforma a tropa em espectadores dóceis expostos a todas as incertezas do não saber. Para Bauman, a manipulação da incerteza coexiste com uma forma de poder panóptico. Como os atores só conseguem ver no seu raio limitado de visão, ignoram se os "superiores os estão observando"; desta forma, "os internos devem se comportar o tempo todo como se estivessem efetivamente sob vigilância." Enquanto a visão dos generais era quase total, graças aos modernos meios eletrônicos e aos mapas, ao manuseio da informação, os soldados ignorando a razão dos deslocamentos se movimentam como descreveu Bauman, "num território de névoa opaco" (41). É preciso ter-se em mente que enquanto os combatentes mergulham num clima de exaustão emocional, os generais e senhores de Lisboa têm a "legibilidade e transparência do espaço"—elementos modernos e que fazem a diferença da racionalidade. No relato de *Os cus de Judas,* a ação concreta da retórica bélica do comando se reduz a uma cartografia interpretativa composta de zona liberada e zona inimiga; mapas eriçados de pontinhos indicativos da posição das tropas.

Desta maneira, nossa operação de caça furtiva chegou ao seu final através deste tosco ensaio. No entanto, o relato da guerra colonial, como uma Odisséia, não chegou ao final. Será perpetuamente recitada e reescrita e revivida pelos que a fizeram. Até mesmo pelos que jamais a fizeram. Ela parece só ter princípio. A guerra colonial na África, conforme a lemos no romance de Lobo Antunes, pareceu-nos menos um conflito contra os rebeldes. Aliás, não logramos divisar quase nenhum. É muito mais um duelo contra a narrativa recitada, essa falsa consciência relatada por Marx, que aparece travestida de moira, de destino. No entanto, ela é só o delírio da narrativa. A luta do autor-narrador é pela busca da felicidade. Para Blaise Pascal, por outro lado, "Todos os homens procuram ser felizes; não há exceção. Por diferentes que sejam os meios que empregam, tendem todos a esse fim. O que leva uns a irem para a guerra e outros a não irem é esse mesmo desejo que esteja em todos acompanhado de diferentes pontos de vista" (141). Lobo Antunes, em *Os cus de Judas*, produziu uma escrita de libertação, uma narrativa de combate existencial, de

regeneração. Somos tentados a afirmar que a narrativa do duplo duelo é a escrita da decadência do império da recitação. Convém assinalar, no entanto, que conceituamos decadência como parte integrante da vida. Ela é, como a exaltou Jean Cocteau, "o grande minuto em que uma civilização se torna encantada." Ou, conforme Maffesoli, ela integra os

> [...] instantes encantadores dos carnavais, dos festivais, das festas de todas as ordens. Minutos encantados dos encontros amigáveis ou amorosos, ainda que sejam sem amanhã. Encantamento dos prazeres da carne e da comida, da natureza. Efervescência efêmera dos transes de todas as ordens. Inclusive levantes e revoltas, barulheiras, barbáries, que freqüentemente se erguem contra ordem estabelecida, anódinos e brutais, esses adventos são legião. Sua intensidade se basta a si mesma. Esgota-se no próprio ato de sua realização. É isso que permite acusá-los de frivolidade, mas é o que os torna profundos: tudo o que se basta a si mesmo, na medida em que 'isto' confirma a vida. (123)

A escrita vigorosa de *Os cus de Judas* além do relato de um conflito é, também, uma contundente—ainda que contraditória—confirmação da vida. Esta singular narração da guerra colonial parece ocultar/revelar um desejo profundo de modernizar o país natal. Aspira lhe refazer a história, tendo na memória pessoal um suporte tanto para uma auto-reflexão quanto para um repensar a vida e a cultura portuguesa. É possível pensar nesta obra como a confissão de uma revolta individual ocorrida no interior do aparato repressor da insurreição africana. Porém, creio que ela é muito mais do que isso, ela multiplica seus próprios sentidos. O mais oculto, porém, é o que lhe conferiu seu autor, esse ser todo-poderoso na onipotência de seu lugar.

O conflito colonial travado por Portugal na África marcou tanto o narrador-personagem que sua vida ficou, desde então, inextricavelmente ligada a esse tempo e a esse espaço. Ao morrer, renascerá no tempo imobilizado da sua narrativa. Seu berço será uma África forjada na memória onde, como numa Ítaca homérica, encontrará a liberdade e a felicidade:

> Penso que quando eu morrer a África colonial voltará ao meu encontro, e procurarei em vão, no nicho do deus zumbi, os olhos de madeira que não há, que verei de novo o quartel de Mangando a dissolver-se no calor, os negros da sanzala ao longe, a mancha da pista de aviação acenando escarninhamente para ninguém. De novo será noite e apear-me-ei do unimogue a caminho do posto de socorros, onde o tipo sem rosto

> agoniza, aclarado pelo petromax que um cabo segura à altura da cabeça e contra o qual os insectos se desfazem num ruidozinho quitinoso de torresmos. (Antunes 197)

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Haunting Imperial Representations into Dialogue: *Os cus de Judas* by António Lobo Antunes and *Waiting for the Barbarians* by J. M. Coetzee[1]

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Abstract: Bearing in mind that the colonial experience decisively influenced the Anglophone and the Lusophone worlds, it is important to consider the literary production of writers from different traditions from a comparative perspective. Their books not only problematize cultural and power structures, but also examine the implications of this process for the construction and transformation of individual and collective identities. In this paper, I propose to compare two books: *Os cus de Judas* (1979) by António Lobo Antunes and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) by J. M. Coetzee. Both novels discuss relationships of power between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery from the perspective of two men working for the colonial enterprise of their native countries in a war context. My aim is to examine how and to what extent the novels, taking the protagonists' traumatic memories as a starting point, converge on the reflection upon the ambiguous status of colonizers in the colonies, thus proposing conflicting representations of empire, which problematize the transforming and ideologically negotiable condition of individual and collective identities.

"[S]entado na cabina da camioneta, ao lado do condutor,
de boné nos olhos, o vibrar de um cigarro infinito na mão,
iniciei a dolorosa aprendizagem da agonia"
Antunes, *Os cus de Judas*

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 61-70.
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> "And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
> Those people were some kind of solution."
> (Cavafy, "Waiting for the Barbarians")

With the growth of post-colonial studies, the myth that only colonized people were the victims of the process of colonization was debunked. Many writers started to discuss and problematize not only the experience of officers working for the colonial enterprise both in the colonies and in the metropolis, but also the semantic investments they made in the symbolic representations of the empire from their perspective.

In this paper I focus my attention on two novels: *Os cus de Judas* [*South of Nowhere*] (1979) by António Lobo Antunes, and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) by J. M. Coetzee. My main interest is to compare how writers belonging to different literary traditions, but affected in the same way by imperialism (though within different historical and social contexts), approached the representation of the ambiguities related to the implementation of colonialist policies and their effects.

Although Antunes's volume has definite and unequivocal spatial and temporal coordinates, making reference to the Portuguese Colonial War, unlike Coetzee's book, whose allegorical traits might refer to any country submitted to colonial oppression at any time, both novels discuss violence in the colony and have narrators who are male officers of the colonial enterprise.[2] Both texts are confessional discourses which problematize the effects of dislocation on the protagonists' search for identity (Ashcroft; Seixo) and consider the significant epistemological and ideological implications of the characters' transit across borders. My aim in this essay is to examine how and to what extent Lobo Antunes and Coetzee use the protagonists' traumatic memories to reflect on the colonizers' ambiguous stature in the colony, thus proposing conflicting representations of empire and addressing the artificial, plural and ideologically negotiable condition of individual and collective identities.

Defining what a frontier is in a context of colonial dominance is apparently paradoxical, for the physical borders delimiting metropolitan and colonial space do not correspond to the cultural frontiers that determine social and cultural relations between colonizers and colonized. Thus, if, on the one hand, it is somewhat contradictory to distinguish the metropolis from the colony, as they are both part of the same imperialist territory, on the other hand, the distinction between metropolis and colony defines ideological borders that

clearly determine the power relations between the centre and the margins. The apparent paradox is ultimately undermined when we accept that discussing the frontier within the frame of colonial dominance implies considering an issue that rests on a rhetoric of limits, as understood in Ribeiro's "A Retórica." This discussion has important repercussions on the configuration of individual and collective identities.

I believe that the officer who works for the empire in the colony may be characterized as a frontier being, for, as I have already stated elsewhere, I understand the frontier as a multipolar axiological space.[3] In other words, and according to António de Sousa Ribeiro's reading of Boaventura de Sousa Santos's theoretical assumptions, the frontier is, *par excellence,* the space of interaction and cultural construction of the Other. In this sense, it should be understood as an area of dialogue and learning that is potentially emancipating. The characterization of the frontier as a multipolar axiological space makes the opposition between colonizers and colonized considerably relative, for the experience of the frontier gives rise to the ambivalent identification which Bhabha emphasizes and which is related to the mixture of attraction and repulsion between the parts.

In the novels analyzed in this essay, the protagonists experience an identity crisis that results mainly from knowledge acquired on the frontier and from their progressive inability to accept the physical and/or imaginary limits imposed by imperial power. Within a space where, due to the colonizing process, the sense of belonging of colonizers and colonized alike becomes ambiguous and questionable, contact with the colonized in the violent atmosphere of war initiates a process of reconfiguring identity, which in turn reveals its dynamic and problematic condition (Mendes), with obvious implications in the configuration of imagined national community as conceived by Anderson. The contact and, in some cases, the interaction with the colonized stimulates the colonial officer to search for the Other, which is a quest for himself/herself at the same time. In this process, surreptitious attempts to erase or silence the Other are disclosed and confronted. If, on the one hand, the imperial ideological machine constructs the image of the colonial Other (Boehmer), adhering to the principle that the colonized is socially and culturally inferior to the colonizer, then on the other hand the experience of colonial war confronts the metropolitan officer with the Other, whose condition of vulnerability is not very different from his/hers. Consequently, not only is the alleged superiority and authority of the colonizer subverted—so too is the obscure notion that

only the colonized is a victim of the colonizing process.

It is worth returning to the protagonists' situations in the two novels in order to clarify what I mean by experience of the frontier and its influence on the revelation of the Other. The doctor in Antunes's novel and the magistrate in Coetzee's narrate the memories of their comings and goings to and from the borders of the empire. In *Os cus de Judas*, the doctor travels between Lisbon and Angola and, within the Angolan territory, between urban centres and the wilderness. In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the magistrate travels to the frontier with the aim of handing the young barbarian he protects back to her people. In the South African writer's novel, the frontier marks the limit that separates the empire from the territory where the so-called "barbarians" live. They were dispossessed of their land by the colonizers, and, although they are rarely seen, the imperialist discourse transforms them into a potential threat to the balance of life in the colony. Despite the fact that the metropolis is neither a starting point nor a destination in the protagonist's trips, the walled-town where the narrator lives represents a space of imperial control, even though it is very distant from the metropolitan centre of decisions.

In the Portuguese writer's novel, the doctor's trip to Angola is not voluntary and is approached, from the very beginning, as a transition from childhood to adulthood, an assumption that confers on the trip to the *Ultramar* an important epistemological dimension on an individual level. This dimension ironically reflects the protagonist's aunts' hope that the war could transform him into a man. Moreover, its relevance extends to the collective domain when we consider that the narrator's account of his memories in the Colonial War deconstructs the imperialist propaganda system that had been justifying and sustaining not only the empire but also the necessity of the Angolan conflict. It is worth noting that, in Lobo Antunes's novel, the narrator's comings and goings to and from Lisbon and Luanda (*simulacrum* of the metropolitan capital in the colony) result in his progressive "de-identification" with the metropolis and the glorious national past that the historical discourse helped transform into a myth.

In Coetzee's novel, the journey to the frontier of the barbarians' "occupied territory" is voluntary, though no less dangerous. In fact, it represents a final attempt to read and interpret the Other, mainly in the form of those who had undergone torture inflicted by the representatives of the Third Bureau. The Other is represented by the young barbarian woman who the magistrate receives in his house and with whom he has an intimate relationship. It is

curious to observe that, from the beginning of the novel, the magistrate is characterized as a man who has a special interest in the past, as illustrated by his meticulous care in finding, preserving and interpreting objects from other civilizations that have withstood the devastating action of time. However, his attempts to read the Other, which are informed by his erotic relationship with the young barbarian and by the deciphering of inscriptions found in the archaeological remains, fail (Parry 48; Jolly 127-28; Kossew 93-94; Dovey 143). The magistrate's care with the young woman's body is symptomatically similar to the way in which he tends the remains found in the sand. (The rituals of cleaning and preserving objects with the use of oil are illustrative examples of this). His attempt to read the Other through the marks left on the woman's body and on the disinterred objects reveals his respect for memory and explains his zeal to leave everything ready and conserved, for he believes that, in the future, his civilization will also be faced as the Other when its traces are found and analyzed.

When comparing the two books, it is clear that in Coetzee's novel the epistemological search for the Other (already found in Lobo Antunes's, albeit circumscribed to the Portuguese colonial experience) becomes even more comprehensive, and curiously, in pragmatic terms, more effective, since there are no definite spatial or temporal coordinates. Leaving aside the opinion of several critics, who equate the novel's context with the apartheid rule in South Africa, I prefer to focus on the novel's lack of definition of the historical period at issue, the characters' names, and the geographical location of the metropolis and the colony. My aim is to show that, as in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the empire Coetzee's reader gets to know through the magistrate's memories is one that transcends time, conferring an important trans-temporal dimension on the novel and the problems it addresses.

In fact, the allegorical nature of Coetzee's novel translates the author's interest in highlighting how important it is to know and respect the Other in any civilization. Hence the protagonist's need to observe and decipher the mysterious marks left on the woman's tortured body, as well as on the ruins of the past. The woman, however, resists the magistrate's questions, and usually answers with silence whenever he tries to find out how the suffering has been inflicted upon her.[4] Thus, the magistrate is unable to get to know and reveal the Other embodied in the barbarian woman (here it is worth noting that, etymologically, "barbarian" means "one who is culturally strange or different"). He will only truly understand the nature of the colonial Other's condition

when he himself is subjected to various types of violence by the Third Bureau men and, after being released, becomes a wanderer living at the margins of society, deprived of authority and, to some extent, of his identity as representative of the empire in the colony.

I now return to Homi Bhabha's notion of ambivalent identification, since both Lobo Antunes and Coetzee try, through the protagonists' behavior, to blur the hierarchical, cultural and social frontiers, which, according to the imperialistic logic, should distinguish the colonizers from the colonized. The ambiguity of identity (I maintain that it is an "anxiety" of identity) stems from the doctor's and the magistrate's confrontation with other officers serving "the imperialist cause"—confrontation that derives from the abuse of power that promotes the Other's dehumanization, transforming him/her into an animal. In Lobo Antunes's novel, the example of the sadistic and violent behavior of PIDE's agents towards prisoners or that of the Katangese soldier who shamelessly violates the doctor's privacy when he uses the latter's toothbrush are illustrative of the aforementioned ambiguity/anxiety of identity. In the South African writer's text, out of many possible examples, I would like to highlight Colonel Joll's violence, for he unflinchingly believes that "truth" can only be extracted from prisoners through the infliction of pain. Coetzee thus addresses the problem of the artificial character of a "true" testimony, since it is given under torture and thus depends on the tortured person's capacity to resist pain and suffering. Colonel Joll's belief that truth can only be achieved by means of violence ultimately deconstructs the apparent truth that justifies the empire and the colonizers' superiority over the barbarians. The individual memories that the magistrate tries to organize through writing are transformed into an exercise of reconfiguration of the public representation of memory, as well as a site of memory (Nora), which proposes an ambivalent representation of the authority of an empire undergoing a process of deconstruction.

All these examples illustrate how identity is socially fabricated and refabricated through social interactions, and how individuals shape their identities on the basis of conflicts between different agents and socializing places (Mendes 490). Lobo Antunes's and Coetzee's choice of protagonists is clearly not gratuitous for, despite their critical voices, they are "civilizing emissaries" who, in the colonial space, are vested with power (power to treat and save lives in the doctor's case and to restore order in the magistrate's case). First, within the specific context of colonial war, such choice undermines the colonizer's authority as regards decisions on life and death, as well as on right and wrong.

The doctor in Lobo Antunes's novel struggles with his condition as a man transformed into a cowardly animal by the imperialist army, feeling impotent before the violence of war and afraid for his own life and for that of his fellows in all the "cus de Judas" he has been to. If, on the one hand, the doctor sees the soldiers' bodies being sealed off in plumb coffins, from where the unforgettable odor of death exhales, on the other, he helps colonized women deliver their babies in silence. By being legally vested with the power to draw borders between good and evil in the colony, the magistrate experiences the power abuses ordered by another emissary of the empire when the former is considered an enemy, which is also when his "painful learning of agony" begins.[5]

It is interesting to question why both authors address the experience of two ruined empires through two male discourses that are proffered by colonizers. In the search for a possible answer, I would like to focus my attention on the relationships these two men establish with female characters in the narratives. In both novels, the protagonists' relationships with colonized women are ruled by silence. Sofia somehow represents the doctor's encounter with his human side. She represents much more than a way to satisfy his sexual needs. In her arms the doctor finds comfort amid wartime privations (here, it is important to notice that the chapter identified by "S" is one of the harshest in terms of criticism of the empire). It seems hasty to interpret the female characters' silence (also present in the doctor's relationship with the woman he meets at the bar and who listens to his accounts in a post-colonial situation) as an element that suggests lack of communication or resistance. The African woman is characterized as free by nature. Silence, by contrast, can be read as a sign of mutual understanding and comprehension, as a sign of a possible relationship between colonizers and colonized, without the specter of the imposition of one's authority over the other's submission. It is worth pointing out that Sofia's silence is totally different from that of the female prisoner who is raped by the army officer. In this case, there is no exchange, no communion, just exploitation. However, this same violence eventually reaches Sofia when she is considered a "commissary" by PIDE and faces death with her "ticket to Luanda," after having been arrested and repeatedly raped by the soldiers. The doctor is left with another kind of silence: the cowardly silence of all those who, once again, feel powerless to fight against the excesses and absurdities of the colonial enterprise—a silence that is definitively broken when he undergoes a moment of catharsis promoted by the remembering process and that is transformed

into the novel *Os cus de Judas*.

The magistrate, on the other hand, develops a bizarre kind of relationship with the young barbarian. He knows the most intimate parts of her body thanks to their erotic relationship. The odd aspect is that this eroticism does not result in sexual intercourse. Unlike the soldiers, who helped the woman but exchanged a coat or a pair of boots for sexual favors, the magistrate wants to know how torture was used against her and her father, as if this knowledge were vital not only to his understanding of the colonial enterprise and of his role in the colonial project, but also to the configuration of his individual and collective identity. On the one hand, as pointed out before, the young woman's silence may be read as a form of resistance to the Other's rule, for revealing the details of the torture she was subjected to implies the acknowledgment of the colonizers' power, and, as such, the negation of her barbarian identity.

On the other hand, however, the woman's silence reflects the contradictory difficulties of communication between colonizers and colonized. In other words, the young barbarian interprets the magistrate's refusal to have sexual intercourse with her as a way of refusing the Other (in this case, the colonial other). It is only when both share the adversities of the journey towards the territory occupied by the barbarians that she understands the magistrate's effort to return her to her people (even though he would like her to return with him to the walled-town). It is then, upon her insistence, that sexual intercourse finally takes place. As in Lobo Antunes's novel, and specifically as regards the doctor's relationship with Sofia, there is no appropriation. Communication, however, is not effective, and this becomes evident when the barbarian prefers to remain with her people and the magistrate regrets not having learned the barbarians' language.

In Coetzee's, as well as in Lobo Antunes's book, the written word represents the protagonist's effort to break the silence dominating the power relations between metropolis and the colony, between colonizers and colonized. This written word denounces the hollowness of the myth of danger represented by the barbarians, and starts to regulate the inhabitants' daily lives in the walled-town as soon as they are no longer protected by the empire. It is again the magistrate who tries to bring order to the chaos created by the abuses of history imposed by imperial power: no longer as one of its representatives, but instead as someone who has experienced the ambiguity and anxiety represented by frontier knowledge, and who is searching for his identity through the constant quest for the Other, that Other who is denied or silenced by

imperial power. In sum, Lobo Antunes's and Coetzee's novels represent an attempt by writers belonging to different literary traditions to symbolically reveal and discuss the burden of the imperialist legacy upon history through fictional discourse. And this attempt clearly implies the reassessment of the epistemological and ideological representation of history itself (Parry 62; Watson 32-33).

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Elena Z. Galvão for having revised the final version of this paper.

[2] On *Waiting for the Barbarians* as an allegory, see Jolly; Kossew; and Dovey.

[3] See Martins in the list of Works Cited. I am grateful to Wladimir Krysinski for having suggested the expression "multipolar axiological space."

[4] On silence in the fictions of J. M. Coetzee and within the discussion of colonial and post-colonial discourses, see Parry and Marais.

[5] I borrowed the expression "painful learning of agony" from Antunes's *Os cus de Judas*.

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Writing the War and the Man in the First Novels of António Lobo Antunes

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Abstract: Lobo Antunes's first three novels relate silence, or the difficulty in verbal communication, first of all to a natural predisposition to isolation on the part of the protagonist(s)/narrator(s); secondly, to the experience of war. This dialectic of silence and speech, or of entrapment in silence and the urge to break it, is constantly reworked in the entwining of the fiction of autobiography and colonial war. The three novels appear as a powerful effort to undermine the "deafening" official silence surrounding the lost conflict and to place the colonial war under scrutiny in post-Salazar Portugal.

The colonial war is a recurrent theme in much of António Lobo Antunes's fictional work, sometimes more directly, at others more diffusely. But it is in his first three novels that the author engages with the topic in the most personal way because in them the experience of the war is constructed as an essential part of the author's fiction of autobiographical writing. While both *Memória de elefante* (1979) and *Conhecimento do inferno* (1980) are narrated in a third person which periodically slips into a more emotive first one, *Os cus de Judas* (also of 1979) is fully narrated in the first person. The three novels give a strong impression of autobiographical writing. This is due first of all to the frequent entanglement of first- and third-person narration—always based "no ponto de vista único da personagem-narra-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 71-87.
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dora" (Seixo 37)—but also to the fact that these novels were published in close succession, so that the reading public became almost simultaneously acquainted with the *personae* of three protagonists displaying striking similarities. Over the years since the publication of his earliest work, the author António Lobo Antunes has become generally known to his public as having participated in the colonial war in Angola and being a psychiatrist, which has served to confirm the readers' initial surmise that these are autobiographical traits. Nevertheless, and especially in the case of an author often very reticent to give interviews and to speak of his private life, one must be extremely careful not to fall into the trap of attributing an autobiographical origin to what is much more likely, either also or principally, a fictional creation.

The illusion of autobiographical writing, then, is created first of all by the alternating of third- and first-person narrative in the first and in the third novels, and by the almost overbearing presence of the narrative I in the second, as well as in all three cases by the strong internal focalisation on the thoughts and fears of the protagonist(s). And the "man" the reader discovers in each of the three successive protagonists is a psychiatrist/doctor who has returned from the colonial war in Angola, the memory of which clearly haunts him in his return to his medical career in Lisbon. Each of the three protagonists is also struggling to become a writer. In *Memória de elefante*, the protagonist struggles to write mostly poems (58, 67, 68, 69, 71), or perhaps "a poem or a story" (76), and then also "the novels and the poems that he perpetrated without writing them" (108).[1] In *Os cus de Judas*, the narrator accumulates "novels [he] still had to write" (*South* 40).[2] He mentions on several occasions his elder daughter and his hopes that she will one day find it easier to write than he: "Talvez que ela escrevesse um dia os romances que eu tinha medo de tentar" (*Cus* 88). In *Conhecimento do inferno*, the protagonist is initially anxious "to complete the novel he was writing, a messy, feverish narrative of war" (38).[3] Finally, the protagonist is revealed to coincide with the author-narrator, with a full-name identification that wholly satisfies the fundamental postulate of Lejeune's autobiographical pact: he is formally introduced by a common friend to another Portuguese writer who makes a brief appearance in the novel, with the words: "Este é o António Lobo Antunes" (*Conhecimento* 77). This comes after another autobiographical disclosure earlier in the novel, referring to the place where

> no Verão anterior, passara três semanas com a Isabel para acabar a *Memória de elefante*, que arrastava atrás de si havia meses num desprazer de maçada, construindo capítulo a capítulo na lentidão penosa do costume, à espera da chegada das palavras. (*Conhecimento* 61)

We are, then, in the presence of a character, or three characters, for whom writing does not come easy, a difficulty not dissimilar from that of breaking the silence in any situation of oral communication, which is equally registered in many occasions in these novels.

One of the most striking impressions one often has from reading Lobo Antunes's work is that of being bombarded with images. This sensation of an irresistible abundance is closely tied with the author's characteristically torrential style, in which a true avalanche of words carries forth the rich flow of imagery. The following is a good example of such a torrential style, verging on the baroque, taken from an ostensibly autobiographical passage from *Memória de elefante* [*Elephant's Memory*]:

> Como quem enfia sem pensar a mão no bolso à procura da gorgeta de uma resposta mergulhou o braço na gaveta da infância, *brique-a-braque inesgotável de surpresas*, tema sobre o qual a sua existência posterior *decalcava variações* de uma monotonia baça, e trouxe à tona ao acaso, nítido na concha da palma, ele miúdo acocorado no bacio diante do espelho do guarda-fato em que as mangas dos casacos pendurados de perfil como as pinturas egípcias *proliferavam a abundância de lianas moles* dos príncipes de gales do seu pai. [...] [C]ostumavam deixá-lo assim horas seguidas na sua chávena de Sèvres de esmalte onde o chichi *pianolava escalas tímidas de harpa, a conversar consigo mesmo* as quatro ou cinco palavras de um vocabulário monossilábico completado de onomatopeias e guinchos [...]. (25; emphasis added)

Such is the style with which Lobo Antunes has made us familiar, with its startling metaphors (*the gratuity of a reply, the drawer of childhood*), its metonymical reduplications (*the chamber pot / his Sèvres porcelain cup*), its unexpected comparisons (*jackets hanging in profile like Egyptian paintings*), in sum, that "endlessly surprising bric-a-brac" of images and figures of literary discourse, which is the hallmark of the author. Moreover, the passage quoted also serves to exemplify the sort of verbal opulence usually associated with the lushness of imagery. On two occasions, the exuberant lexicon amplifies

images from the realm of music (*the composition of variations on a theme, the playing on the piano of timid scales meant for the harp*), and one that readily reminds us of tropical forests (*the jackets proliferating in a liana-like abundance*).

Nevertheless, and this is a fundamental paradox of Lobo Antunes's work, this luxuriant, plethoric prose is most often used to narrate the dreariness in the lives of protagonists who share a somewhat morbid taste for silence, or inability to break it, and a fear of aphasia. The young child recalled in the passage quoted above already presages such situations of oppressive silence, when he is *left* in a position where he can only *speak to himself*, in an imposed, solitary silence that he manages to break, for himself only, with the paucity of half a dozen words, onomatopoeias and screeches.

Lobo Antunes's first three novels very clearly relate silence, or the difficulty in verbal communication, first of all to a natural predisposition to solitude and isolation on the part of the protagonist(s)/narrator(s); second, and no less important, to the experience of the war. This dialectic of silence and speech, or of the entrapment in silence and the urge to break it, is constantly reworked in the entwining of the fiction of autobiography and colonial war, particularly in the early novels. Later works in which the colonial war is still the central theme, such as *Fado alexandrino*, no longer play so strongly on the note of the "real"-life origin of the tensions between silence and the urge to overcome it because the illusion of autobiographical writing is disrupted in the polyphonic narrative construction.

Memória de elefante, Lobo Antunes's first novel, focuses on one day and one night in the life of a psychiatrist afflicted by feelings of irredeemable solitude, apparently caused or aggravated by his recent estrangement from his wife. This novel, which seems to be the perfect obverse of the one which followed it only a few months later, stresses the personal and family reasons for the protagonist's isolation, whereas the next one emphasizes the same consequence by pointing rather to his involvement in the war as its cause. In *Memória*, we see the protagonist progressively lapsing into silence, but still making desperate attempts to stay in touch with a few, carefully chosen people. Early in the novel there is a brief reference to his mother's deafness ("conversar com a surdez da mãe afigurava-se-lhe mais inútil do que socar uma porta cerrada para um quarto vazio" [13-14]), though it is not clear whether the deafness is real or metaphorical. Later we learn also of her liking for silence: "Herdei talvez de ti o gosto do silêncio [...]. O gosto do

silêncio e o fitarmo-nos como estranhos separados por distância impossível de abolir" (70).

Whatever the origin of this need or liking for silence, or this inability to fight against ever encroaching silence, its consequences for the protagonist are, at a personal level, an awareness of his growing social isolation and, at a creative level, an immediate difficulty in writing. On the very next page the protagonist equates the arduous practice of writing to a sort of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation he must attempt on "the remaining graves of deceased words" (71). As to the question of social isolation, in *Memória de elefante* we see the protagonist still striving to stay in touch with others, particularly the friend he begs to meet him for lunch.

If the graphic marking of direct speech on the page of a book can be taken to be the immediate sign of some basic communication between characters, *Memória* does present a considerable amount of dialogue. Read carefully, though, it becomes clear that it is more often than not an appearance of dialogue, or that the dialogue is between other characters, to whom the protagonist frequently replies only with the most laconic of answers ("Porque não?" [41]; "O quê o quê?" [71]). Nevertheless, apart from the professional exchanges between doctor and patient, the protagonist of *Memória* does engage in conversation with some people and, more importantly, seeks to do so of his own initiative. The nurse Deolinda, with whom he works, offers a tacit comfort and understanding which does not need extensive conversation: "De longe em longe cabe-nos a sorte de topar com uma pessoa assim, que gosta de nós não apesar dos nossos defeitos mas com eles, num amor desapiedado e fraternal" (30).

In different circumstances, both the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* and the protagonist of *Conhecimento do inferno* find a similar sort of communion ("a comunhão do isolamento partilhado" [*Memória* 95]) in the few words (and the many silences) each of them exchanges with the medic who helps him: "Foda-se, disse o furriel que limpava as botas com os dedos. Pois é, disse eu, e acho que até hoje nunca tive um diálogo tão comprido com quem quer que fosse" (*Cus* 73). Or again in the silent sympathy Lieutenant Eleutério offers him at a later moment of dramatic impotence, in Chiúme: "O alferes Eleutério [...] pousou a mão, sem falar, no meu ombro e foi essa, percebe?, uma das raras vezes em que até hoje me achei acompanhado" (*Cus* 90). Likewise, in the third novel, we read a similar comment about the quartermaster nurse and the silent understanding between the two men: "Era um óptimo enfermeiro e entendíamo-nos bem, normalmente trabalhávamos sem falar

porque ambos percebíamos o que o outro queria, o que o outro necessitava" (*Conhecimento* 258).

But other signs already point to the protagonist's increasing difficulties in communicating with others in *Memória de elefante*. During lunch with his friend, the conversation soon becomes a monologue like the one that fills the pages of *Os cus de Judas*. The ever more self-absorbed protagonist talks only about himself, his long monologue merely punctuated by fillers such as "you see" or "you know what I mean" (73-74), which become a regular pattern in the second novel. And as in *Os cus de Judas*, the most heart-rending attempts at breaking the engulfing silence—by remembering or reestablishing a feeling of intimacy with someone much loved and lost (the ex-wife and the mother in *Memória*, Sofia in *Os cus*)—clearly stand out in the text. This is so because, first of all, they use the (familiar) second person pronoun, thus breaking the general he/I pattern, but also because they appear in extremely lyrical passages in either novel. Pathetically, however, the women for whom they are intended never hear such apostrophes. The psychiatrist, therefore, finds himself increasingly in the same situation he recalls from his childhood, namely reduced to talking to himself ("a conversar consigo mesmo" [*Memória* 25]),[4] "like a blind man who continues to talk to someone who has tip-toed out of the room, a blind man screaming to an empty chair" (159).

While Lobo Antunes's first novel does not make the war experience stand out as much as the second, it still does point out that the war has aggravated the protagonist's predisposition to silence and his sense of solitude in general. The sight of the Lisbon beggar close to whom the protagonist stands in order to spy on his daughters and with whom he thus establishes some (quite unwanted) complicity reminds him of Africa and the war. And the first memory that comes to his mind is that of the sound of thunder breaking the silence at dusk ("a Baixa do Cassanje se povoava do eco dos trovões" [*Memória* 110]). The three salient memories he then recalls are those of the wait (here waiting for the mail, elsewhere both in *Os cus de Judas* and *Conhecimento do inferno* the wait for an attack or for death itself), illness (here the fever which struck his wife who joined him in Cassanje, as well as their baby daughter), and the suicide of a soldier at Mangando. The Mangando episode returns in full detail in *Conhecimento do inferno* (chapter 10), where it gives rise to a somber meditation on death and the war. In *Memória*, though, the description of the suicide is particularly concise and gory, and symmetrically framed by indirect references to the silence that surrounds the incident: at the beginning,

the laconic "good-night" that the soldier pronounces just before pulling the trigger on himself, and at the end the simple mention "Mangando and the yelping of the cabiris in the darkness" (*Memória* 110), as if only the animals could bear to break the ominous silence under the circumstances.

An immediately apparent consequence of the protagonist's involvement in the war is that the experience has driven him into even further silence. When harassed by a colleague with different political views, who accuses him of approving of Portugal's "handing over the overseas provinces to the blacks" (*Memória* 42), the psychiatrist embarks on a passionate tirade against the evils of Portuguese colonialism and the colonial war in Angola. This is evidently called forth by what he sees as the man's total ignorance about Africa. However, the tirade remains unspoken; all of the doctor's vehemence is kept to himself, so that "this fellow [...], this cretin [...], this idiot [...], this fool" who has unleashed the diatribe hears nothing of it. Whether the doctor needs to feel cocooned in protective silence or simply suspects that his words would have no effect, the fact is that he does not make his opinion heard.

What is most disturbing is that, in the end, the psychiatrist's distrust applies also to himself: "que sei eu África?" (*Memória* 43)—formulated in exactly the same way as the previous five questions: "Que sabe este tipo de África? [...] este caramelo [...], este cretino [...], este parvo [...]. Que sabe este palerma de África?" (*Memória* 42-43). This self-doubt needs to be read in the light of the fundamental change the protagonist underwent in Africa: it was there that his feelings of being forever out of place, uprooted, even stateless in his own country ("eu virado apátrida na minha terra" [*Memória* 148]) originated. Whereas in *Memória* it is when the protagonist returns to Lisbon that he becomes aware of his feelings of displacement in his own city ("Esta cidade que era a sua" [*Memória* 97]), in *Os cus de Judas* it is already in Angola that the narrator begins to feel the anguish of no longer belonging anywhere.[5] Curiously, the adjective used in both novels is the same: *despaisado* ("out of place"), as if its introduction in *Memória* signaled the development of the theme in the following novel, where the narrator feels like "an exiled ostrich" (*South* 99) ("um avestruz despaisado" [*Cus* 149]). In *Memória*, the psychiatrist had to choose between war service and exile abroad ("despaisado exílio" [*Memória* 42])—the dilemma of "the war or Paris," conscription or desertion, to which contemporary novels and poems of the independence wars in Africa often make allusion. In *Os cus*, it is the narrator's long commission at several outposts of the Angolan northeastern front that has made him feel acutely

displaced, both physically and culturally, but above all has turned him into someone forever incapable of belonging anywhere. His war experience, and his involvement with the (restricted) African civilian populations he also cared for, revealed that the place in which he thought he belonged was not only a place but also a set of values and a time already condemned by history. These are the difficulties of "transmuting time into space" (Ashcroft 35), which we have come to identify as a principal characteristic of post-colonial literature.[6]

Symptomatically, when in *Memória de elefante* the protagonist asks himself "what do I know of Africa?" (43), this apparently simple question reveals much about the political and human sympathies of this man who claims to be almost incapable of relating to his fellow Portuguese after his experience of war in Africa. His service in Angola has opened his eyes to a different reality, which the Africans have managed to preserve as their own despite centuries of European domination. But after his tirade against a colleague who knows nothing about that different world, he checks himself too: is he claiming to know all about Africa? That would be falling into the trap Dominique Chaucé has identified, albeit in a very different context, as perpetuating "le discours du maître." It would amount to the same sort of colonial arrogance that the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* denounces when he gives to understand that Africa too has a centuries-old history of its own (unwritten, therefore non-existent in European eyes):

> os velhos e orgulhosos luchazes, senhores das Terras do Fim do Mundo, vindos há muitos séculos da Etiópia em migrações sucessivas, que tinham expulso os hotentotes, os kamessekeles [...]. Velhos livres tornados reles escravos do arame [...] pelo rancor do Estado colonial. (182)

A claim to know all about Africa in *Memória* would be equivalent to indulging in the disdain that the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* detects in the use of the weight of European historical tradition to ignore the African one and to validate colonial occupation. In *Os cus*, the narrator shows his reluctance to collaborate in the Eurocentric suppression of the Africans' alternative mode of history. Embryonically, in *Memória*, this man now forever displaced ("esta condição de despaisado") and forever feeling "doubly an orphan" in the uncertain space "[b]etween the Angola he had lost and the Lisbon he had not regained" (*Memória* 98), stops himself short of speaking *for* (i.e., instead of) the Africans, thus perpetuating their reduction to silence under colonialism.[7] Maria Alzira Seixo has rightly emphasised that Lobo Antunes's female

characters in these early novels are invariably silenced, a silencing we can see as mirroring that of the colonised by the coloniser. Nevertheless, Lobo Antunes's first protagonist at least checks himself in time, stopping short of substituting his voice for the Africans'; and the narrator of his second novel does reveal an understanding of the validity of alternative, African modes of perception of reality, time and history. Both characters, then, do acknowledge and even underscore "the possibility of counter-knowledges" (Young 162), which colonialism (like Orientalism) worked so hard to repress. These are the signs of powerful anti-colonial feelings which herald the awakening of a post-colonial conscience.

In Portugal's contemporary fiction there are many novels of the colonial war that rail at the official silence surrounding the conflict which led to the end of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, but none does so more compellingly than *Os cus de Judas*. That silence, initially imposed by Salazar's regime during the war itself as a means to control the demoralising effect that public awareness of the real number of casualties might have, ended up becoming a generalized habit within Portuguese society itself, even after the war was over—and lost. Having returned to Lisbon after his participation in the war as a conscripted surgeon at the northeastern Angolan front for 27 months, the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* often refers to what appears to him, several years later, to be a conspiracy of silence about the colonial war. In this case, it is no longer only a silence politically imposed and militarily justifiable, but indeed a silence of indifference, accepted and effected by Portuguese society at large, already in post-imperial and supposedly democratic times: "Porque camandro é que não se fala nisto? Começo a pensar que o milhão e quinhentos mil homens que passaram por África não existiram nunca e lhe estou contando uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar" (81).

The narrator has returned to a society which he sees as split between those who made the war and those who did not—in other words, those who understand and those who do not, whether the dichotomy applies to the despised generals who sent the soldiers to war but never risked their own skin, or to the draft-dodgers who lived safely in Paris or London while the conscripts fought.[8] It is not only to his own war memories that the narrator wants to give voice in his long monologue in this novel, but also to those of the forgotten soldiers who went to the war with him, including the many dead who cannot raise their voices in protest against the reigning silence:

> Se a revolução acabou, percebe?, e em certo sentido acabou de facto, é porque os mortos de África, de boca cheia de terra, não podem protestar [...] e nós, os sobreviventes, continuamos tão duvidosos de estar vivos que temos receio de [...] nos apercebermos de que *não existe* [...] *som nas palavras que dizemos* [...] que estamos mortos como eles. (*Cus* 73; emphasis added)

In the case of *Os cus de Judas*, the hushing that the narrator perceives in the society around him contrasts strongly with his enormous personal need to break the general silence and place the colonial war under scrutiny. The novel is a gushing monologue, in which the narrator's outpourings are simply punctuated (rather than actually interrupted) by "bordões da simulação comunicativa" (Seixo 41) directed at his female listener, thus giving the impression that a dialogue is going on. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasise here that, while such a torrent of words in the end remains painfully a monologue—never a dialogue—addressed to a sympathetic listener—never literally an interlocutor, the fact is that the written word, the published novel itself, immediately reached (and continues to do so in the subsequent editions) one of the largest audiences ever in the history of Portuguese publishing. Narrated by a returned army doctor who gives the impression of not quite having the emotional energy to take upon himself the role of official conscience of the country, this novel truly did more than any other to rescue the colonial war from oblivion in post-Salazar Portugal. The narrative, undertaken by a man who diegetically portrays himself as a recluse too morose for company, in fact powerfully counteracts "the silencing effect of imperialistic discourse" (Griffiths 153) by dragging the ugly subject of Portugal's Vietnam into focus over most of its pages.

In them, the narrator makes it clear that the memory of the young men who died in Angola despite his desperate efforts to save them will never let him rest easy, so that in effect he speaks also *for* them (though not, patronisingly, for the Africans). He himself, on the other hand, always claims not to feel sufficiently alive to take up such a demanding cause, in a country which prefers to forget its ex-combatants and even to pretend that the whole war episode never happened: "Tudo é real menos a guerra que não existiu nunca: jamais houve colónias, nem fascismo, nem Salazar, nem Tarrafal, nem PIDE, nem revolução, jamais houve, compreende, nada" (*Cus* 240).

Given the general silence and public indifference about the war, the narrator's memory (and his monologue) would remain private, unheard except

by his solitary, odd female companion. It is curious to point out that this narratee's status changes throughout the book (as opposed to her unchanging silence). Initially, the narrator believes that she, like most Portuguese who did not go to the war, cannot understand. Later he praises her endless equanimity, the "tranquil patience of a statue" (*South* 54) with which she listens to him. And at the end of the novel she seems curiously to have acquired, in his eyes, the status of one of those who did go there, for having attentively listened to his narrative. Perhaps, then, the narrator is vaguely aware of the perlocutionary value (Searle 22-28) of his solitary ramblings. And because his narrative becomes a novel, through the act of publication it acquires a public dimension which allows his private memory to fulfill a social role, that of reversing history's amnesia and breaking the "deafening" official silence.

Conhecimento do inferno is the least somber of these three novels, not only because of the humour with which certain episodes involving mental patients are narrated, but also because the fiction of the narrator's being prey to severe difficulties in speaking to others or in writing is somewhat resolved in the very plot. The novel further develops themes that are already central in the previous ones, though in different proportions: communication difficulties, psychiatry, and the colonial war, in *Memória de elefante* (the obverse; the colonial war, imposed silence, and existential malaise, in *Os cus de Judas* the reverse). In *Conhecimento do inferno*, the narrator-protagonist is travelling back home to Lisbon on his own in his car, so that the question of the difficulty of oral communication does not arise. Furthermore, presumably he has largely (though, by his own admission, not totally) overcome his fear of being unable to write, judging from the (unstated) feeling of confidence that the finishing of a first book (*Conhecimento* 61) must have given him. It is the meditation on the questionable aims and methods of institutional psychiatry that comes to the fore in this novel, but the war experience as the mark of a profound upheaval in the narrator's life runs a close second, as it did already in the first novel.

The hell of the title [knowledge of hell] refers primarily to mental illness and psychiatric hospitals, but also to the misery undergone at the war front. There seem to be two principal links between the two experiences: firstly the lack of reason in both—the irrationality or non-reason of mental patients, and the absurdity or non-sense of war ("a absurda estupidez dos tiros sem razão" [*Memória* 42]); and secondly, the manifest impotence of the victims of either situation—that of the patients trapped in psychiatric hospitals with no control over their lives or treatments, and that of the soldiers sent to war against their

will ("a aventura imposta" [*Memória* 98]), where they too are "imprisoned [...] behind three barbed-wire fences" (*South* 116). Each group suffers at the hands of an all-powerful elite: the patients are at the mercy of the uncaring psychiatrists, the soldiers at that of ambitious, pitiless colonels.

It is in this context that some of the strangest incidents narrated in this novel (the gallery of penises, the cannibalistic episodes) can best be understood, for they reveal the ambivalent, bipolar position in which the psychiatrist-narrator finds himself. In *Memória de elefante*, the psychiatrist is both powerful as a doctor and powerless as a patient ("um gajo anda aqui a aprender a viver ou a ser *domesticado, capado*, desmiolado" [134; emphasis added]). In *Os cus de Judas*, the conscripted surgeon is in all aspects a victim of the war. In *Conhecimento do inferno*, however, a new element is introduced. The psychiatrist cannot, on the one hand, completely extricate himself from the responsibility for the wrongs of institutional psychiatry, which he criticises but in which he too is implicated. Nor can he, on the other, feel free from blame for his involvement in the colonial war. Thus, in the third novel, the narrator is no longer always the victim of the colonial war but also now shares in the national guilt. He recalls the time when he was already awaiting his departure to war in Angola, but he must first medically examine the general recruits:

> Estive alguns momentos [...] a pensar que me haviam mandado a Elvas *não para salvar pessoas* da guerra mas para as enviar para a mata, mesmo os coxos, mesmo os marrecos, mesmo os surdos porque o dever patriótico não excluía ninguém, porque as Parcelas Sagradas do Ultramar necessitavam do sacrifício de todos, porque O Soldado Português É Tão Bom Como Os Melhores, porque o caralho da cona do minete do cabrão do broche da puta que os pariu [...] levantei a cabeça e o meu nariz encontrava-se à altura de dezenas de pénis que rodeavam a mesa aguardando que os observasse, os medisse, *os aprovasse para a morte.* (*Conhecimento* 43; emphasis added)

The doctor is thus placed in a position where he must betray medical ethics: instead of *saving people's lives*, the military hierarchy expects him to certify all these young men as healthy and able-bodied *to be sent to their deaths.* The passage also exemplifies the deconstruction of the nationalist rhetoric of Salazar's regime, which is common in António Lobo Antunes's work, by breaking the series of meaningless political slogans with an impressive list of swear words, more complete even than in the author's best efforts in many

of his later novels. The inclusion of such language, not previously used in Portuguese literary discourse, which Maria Alzira Seixo considers a kind of post-colonial abrogation of standard Portuguese, can also be seen as a highly effective way of disrupting the silence—in the sense of absence of any real meaning—that the repetition of worn-out slogans constitutes.

However, when in the next page those penises which surround the doctor during the recruits' medical examination seem to detach themselves and chase him ("Não eram homens, eram pénis que me perseguiam, me acuavam" [*Conhecimento* 44]), it becomes clear that the doctor's feelings of nausea and terror stem from his sudden realisation that he is now on the side of those *responsible* for the war. He is no longer just another victim. Like the psychiatrists who control their patients' lives, and like the colonels, the political police, and the authorities who dispose of the soldiers' lives by sending them to war, he too has become one of the gaolers ("carcereiros" [*Conhecimento* 211, 263]) or the executioners ("carrascos" [*Conhecimento* 266]).

In addition, the gallery of penises, which initially seems so grotesque and repulsive, in the end appears as a choice justified by the intertextual logic constantly at play in Lobo Antunes's early trilogy. The threatening penises in *Conhecimento do inferno* signal the psychiatrist's bad conscience when he realises that he too has become the instrument of the power structures that sent this generation to war. Still, this is the same country which another psychiatrist, in *Memória de elefante*, describes as an emasculated kingdom: "Terra do camandro: se El-Rei D. Pedro voltasse ao mundo não achava em todo o reino quem *capar*" (*Memória* 67), the same country which Salazar had turned into a domesticated seminary ("o Salazar transformara o país num seminário *domesticado*" [*Memória* 67; emphasis added]). A domesticated seminary, a kingdom where all have been emasculated, or a gagged country? A country that devours its own children, in any case, just as the narrator imagines, in the nightmarish chapter 7, that he eats the corpse of private Pereira, killed at war, whom he was unable to save. But the same chapter concludes with his realisation that he himself is the patient whose flesh his fellow psychiatrists are eating in Sintra, thus confirming that in this novel the narrator feels both a victim and a perpetrator of wrong (both in psychiatry and as to the colonial war). Whether castrated or silenced, nobody in this country has had the courage to vociferate against the colonial war, which in the end explains why the nation now prefers to hide behind an indifferent silence about the subject.

The next three war memories minutely and obsessively described in the novel confirm this fundamental change in the narrator's view of his involvement in the war. The first is a scene of torture of three African men accused of stealing from Portuguese army officers (*Conhecimento* 215-18). To begin with, the episode is narrated in the third person plural, it is the army officers who are taking revenge, but soon two verbs appear in the first person plural, thus implicating the narrator himself. Between the first two actions ("desatámos [...] gritávamos-lhes nós") there is one singular attempt by the narrator ("fechei") to prevent all the soldiers from joining in the brutal scene. Nevertheless, the first suggestion as to how to conceal the ugly evidence of the torture comes from the doctor himself: "Chama-se um fazendeiro do café para lhes dar um tiro—respondi eu a sacudir-me" (*Conhecimento* 218). And the scene finishes with the officers and the doctor asking the very PIDE officer, whom the narrator has so often described as inspiring nothing but scorn and disgust in all of them, for professional advice on how to cover up the torture. While this is one of the most appalling memories recorded in the novel, it is in fact told with considerable (professional?) detachment. And the "friendly" advice ("amigavelmente" [*Conhecimento* 221]) given by the PIDE officer provides the parallel for the narrative to return to the diegetic present and to the repeated equating of psychiatry and torture: "Há maneiras de se fazer as coisas sem se deixar marcas. Um electrochoque [...]. Um coma de insulina [...]. Dez anos de psicanálise não deixam marcas" (*Conhecimento* 221).

The feeling of complicity with the gaolers and the executioners is thus related not only to the practice of institutional psychiatry but also to the war experience itself. And in the end the finger is pointed very personally at the narrator himself, for he too has connived in the cover-up of the ugly truth of the atrocities of the colonial war. Neither does he hide the fact that he too has perpetuated the unpunished, even condoned, rape of colonised women, which has for centuries been the prerogative of the coloniser and above all of invading armies (*Conhecimento* 206-7). The pages in which the narrator recalls the matter-of-factness with which the troops (himself included) have sex with African women, with the tacit (though more likely: helpless) approval of their husbands, make no apologies for his/their behaviour as instruments of colonial subjugation: "no nosso odor pegajoso de invasores" (*Conhecimento* 212).

The final war memory in this novel (the recollection of a soldier's suicide at Mangando) is already included in *Memória de elefante*, and its retelling in *Conhecimento* (repercussions on the already low morale of fellow soldiers and offi-

cers) seems aimed at providing an apology for exceptional behaviour in war circumstances. The conscripts feel dead, many would prefer to die, for their living conditions are appalling: "num buraco como ratos" (*Conhecimento* 256), Mussuma "era uma cova de caixão" (*Conhecimento* 257), their bodies are "inerte[s] [...] fatigado[s] [...] amarrotados e exaustos [...] gastos" (*Conhecimento* 257-8). They would be better off if they were dogs. The war has, in any case, turned them into animals: "—Os animais presos—disse eu—preferem muitas vezes morrer e nós não passamos de animais presos" (*Conhecimento* 256), in much the same way as mental hospitals, according to the narrator, turn their patients into animals ("bichos" [*Conhecimento* 209]).

While Lobo Antunes frequently mentions African, exotic fauna in his work, one of the very last references to the war in this novel revolves around the most familiar of animals, man's proverbial best friend: the dog. Dogs are ever present in and around camps and *sanzalas* in the author's novels, often thin, diseased, famished, pathetic dogs. Here, the dogs

> farejavam os homens nas macas, lambiam-lhes os braços, o pescoço, a cara, e a seguir afastavam-se, apoiavam o tronco nas patas traseiras, levantavam o focinho e principiavam *a latir no estrepitoso silêncio terrível da guerra*. (*Conhecimento* 273-4; emphasis added)

In the three novels here studied, the trauma of the protagonist/narrator's war experience is regularly presented in connection with his difficulty in overcoming silence, both the silence surrounding the question of the colonial war itself and that brought about by his personal difficulty in communicating with other members of society. In *Memória de elefante*, the protagonist tends to see himself as a victim of lack of attention in all personal circumstances. In this as in the following novel, the emphasis is on involvement in the war against personal will, and the fact that this was a traumatic, "imposed adventure." As such, both characters share feelings of displacement and otherness not far removed from similar experiences nowadays often expressed by previously colonised people. Moreover, in *Os cus de Judas*, the narrator is profoundly concerned with a perceived need to break the official silence surrounding the colonial war, in a society that ostracises its returned soldiers and would rather allow the silence of history to spread over the whole uncomfortable episode. In it he speaks both for himself and for a whole generation that went to the war and either died there or came back to an all-pervasive, oppressive his-

torical silence. The narrator of *Os cus de Judas* breaks that silence in his name and in theirs. In *Conhecimento do inferno*, the narrative voice, now avowedly autobiographical, meditates both on personal suffering during the war (his and his fellow soldiers') and on his own complicity in the historical process of colonialism and in the war that eventually put an end to it. All three novels speak out against the war—never comfortably, but never apologetically either. It is a critically piercing voice that can be heard in this early trilogy discussing and dissecting the colonial war that post-Salazar Portugal largely swept under the carpet. And this is a voice not only vehemently clamouring against the colonial war but also refusing to let any of us feel free from blame in our collective responsibility for the *estrepitoso silêncio terrível da guerra*.

Notes

[1] All quotations are taken from António Lobo Antunes, *Memória de elefante*. When translated, translations are mine.

[2] Quotations from the original are taken from António Lobo Antunes, *Os cus de Judas*. Quotations in English are taken from the published English translation, *South of Nowhere*.

[3] Quotations are taken from António Lobo Antunes, *Conhecimento do Inferno*. When translated, translations are mine.

[4] Also: "declarara para si próprio" (119), "disse-se o médico" (124), "Escuta, articulou o psiquiatra dentro de si" (153).

[5] Compare "Esta cidade que era a sua" (*Memória* 97) with his rejection of Luanda in *Os cus de Judas*: "cidade colonial pretensiosa e suja de que nunca gostei" and his belief (then) that Lisbon was still the place where he belonged: "a minha terra são 89,000 quilómetros quadrados com centro em Benfica" (96-7).

[6] Elsewhere (2000) I have argued that this as well as some other novels of the colonial war in Africa display many features which are characteristic of the literatures commonly known in the Western academy as post-colonial.

[7] I have in mind the difficulties that colonised people have encountered for centuries in trying to make their voices heard under colonial administration, and even in post-independence times, which Gayatri Spivak has so powerfully disclosed.

[8] For this common complaint amongst returning soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, see Quintais 62-3.

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The Demise of Paternal Meaning in *Explicação dos pássaros*

Phillip Rothwell

Abstract: This article traces the loss of paternal meaning manifest in António Lobo Antunes's *Explicação dos pássaros.* It equates that loss to the sudden fall of the Salazar/Caetano regime and a rapid disavowal of Marxism. The protagonist's suicide is read not only as his only viable option when faced with a catastrophic collapse in meaning, but also as part of a spectacle in which the Portuguese axis of desire shifts away from the patriarchal Law of the Father towards a meaningless and, by necessity, unproductive law of consumption.

António Lobo Antunes's 1981 novel, *Explicação dos pássaros* [*An Explanation of the Birds*], is a profound and innovative portrait of what happens when one loses one's symbolic father. The novel was published less than a decade after Lisbon's Carnation Revolution, which overthrew over four decades of what we might term symbolic stasis in the figure of a national father and his successor, who aimed to control meaning in Portugal through a textbook fusion of an ideal ego with which the nation could identify and a ferocious super-ego that prohibited dissent. The image of Salazar combined that of a paternalistic protector who authorized what it meant to be Portuguese with that of an inflexible arbiter of the nation's moral code. Caetano sought to continue the role of national father through, among other things, the establishment of a patronizing series of media addresses, his so-called "conversa em família" ["family chat"], the first of which took place on 8 January 1969. Through these, he sought to make the

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 89-96.
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nation feel protected and well served in trying times, while always reminding "o comum dos portugueses" ["the Portuguese general public"] that he was the one with the "responsabilidade do Poder" ["responsibility of Power"] (Caetano 71). His removal from the role of national father was concomitant in Portugal with a search by some for an alternative figure of symbolic paternal authority, before the ideology of Marx was replaced by the inexorable rise of liberal democracy and the trend to consumerism that this has come to imply.

Lobo Antunes's novel captures precisely that moment of rupture in which symbolic fatherhood shifts and changes before sliding away into an orgy designed to trigger consumer desire. A powerful message to arise from Lobo Antunes's text is that the symbolic relevance of fatherhood, as the granter of meaning and the figure whom we confusedly aspire to emulate, has outlived its relevance and is being written out of the picture in a new economy of desire structured around brutal and meaningless consumption. Given the history of twentieth-century Portugal, which renders the figure of the symbolic father highly suspect, it is hardly surprising that he should come under attack in the immediate aftermath of Portugal's transition. What is more interesting in Lobo Antunes's narrative is that the son pays the price for the father's loss of meaning.

The tale is told over a period of four days that, due to the way that the narrative is structured, condense a lifetime of experiences of a certain Rui S. The novel's title points to the recurrent image of a time in his distant childhood when Rui S. happily asked his then-caring father for an explanation of birds. This search for meaning from a father is juxtaposed with the fragmented exposition of a gradually deteriorating relationship, in which his father's infidelity to his mother combines with an adolescent's need to rebel against the figure of paternity, and spirals into an increasing loss of all meaning in Rui's life. Two failed marriages later, and leaving behind an unfinished dissertation on Sidónio Pais, Rui S., in the only meaningful act of his life, commits suicide, an act that signals a spectacular loss of meaning. His body is discovered half-devoured by birds, in an echo of Hitchcock's classic film, as Maria Alzira Seixo has pointed out (Seixo 106-7). The significance of his flesh's satisfaction of a chilling avian appetite goes beyond the resonance of total abandonment that the film *The Birds* intertextually conveys. There is, of course, a palpable sense of abandonment on the part of Rui, given the breach in his relationships with all the other characters in the narrative. However, the birds' consumption of his body is described by one of the witnesses at the inquest of his death as both protective and destructive. The witness had never seen such peculiar behavior

by birds; their role echoes that of the symbolic father who functions to protect and repress, to nurture and destroy. Furthermore, in the novel, birds always represent a meaning that is sought from a father but never ceded. Their ingestion of Rui's flesh is a metaphoric gesture representing Rui's unfulfilled search for meaning. It is a search that destroys him. Literally, the failure to satisfy his need for meaning consumes his flesh.

Throughout the narrative, the more Rui yearns for a father figure, be it his biological ancestor who was compromised by Salazar's corporatist universe and who never quite explained the meaning of the birds, or the ideological embodiment of paternity in the specter of a Marx whom he never manages to please, the more impossible paternity becomes for him. Rui's death is as much a final recognition of the end of paternity as an act of self-obliteration. He fails as a son because society no longer needs or wants a father. It no longer operates on the basis of a yielded heritage that implies both progress and tradition; it is now dependent on an infinitely inflected but never definitive commercial transaction. Rui is the incarnation of the moment of transition, when teleology still hovered in the territory brutal commercialism was about to consume. His hankering after a father cannot be realized, and he cannot himself pass through that oedipal phase to assume the mantle of paternity: his first divorce results in the loss of his children; the progeny of his second marriage are more explicitly rendered unviable by an abortion he facilitates. The question that the text raises is what exactly does it mean to be a father and, more pressingly, does it mean anything any more?

Both psychologically and theologically, one of the primary functions of fatherhood is the bestowal of meaning. Whether it be the Lacanian prohibitions associated with the acquisition of the grammar of a language or the Word that is the beginning until it becomes the flesh of the son in the Judeo- and more concretely the Christian tradition, paternity means to mean. Fatherhood is the traditional repose of the Word, which makes Rui S.'s inability to complete his thesis on Sidónio Pais all the more painful and significant. Rui has adopted a profession that makes him a producer of words. His definition, his identity, rotates around writing about history. His writing reclaims a past and attempts to substitute a silence that divides him from his father. Yet his most important piece of writing remains unfinished, another unfulfilled longing to imbue his life with a meaningful paternal figure, in this instance, another one of Portugal's many wistful reincarnations of Dom Sebastião, the father who wasn't, Sidónio Pais. Sidónio, who used the incipient twentieth-century sci-

ence of propaganda to great effect, sought to dominate the nation at a time of instability and loss of meaning by propagating the image of a strong man in military uniform who knew what was best for his children, the nation. In some ways, he was the precursor to Salazar and projected an intrinsic quality in the rhetoric of paternity: he, in his rather ridiculous military attire, would protect and provide order and meaning. But his protection, like that of Rui's biological father, and like that fostered by Salazar-Caetano after him, implied a certain degree of destruction through the suppression of opposition and was an example of the appropriation of symbolic fatherhood in order to produce what was deemed to be meaning and order in Portuguese society. But, as the text will show, this type of meaning will be sacrificed—in fact in a gesture towards Christ's passion signposted by the four days over which the text is structured—for the birds appear crucified at the hands of the father. Yet this father who is able to horrify his son with the image of a crucified meaning will become an impotent figure, unable to satisfy his new trophy wife sexually, an impotence that captures his own demise as a reproductive father able to perpetuate his worldview through his son. So, what dies on the cross of crucified birds is, in a subversion of the Christian paradigm, paternal authority.

Throughout the text, dysfunctional paternal metaphors accompany waning ideology. His father's frequent business trips as Rui grew up, ostensibly to shore up the family business so that he could pass it down to his son in a traditional succession, in fact point to affairs and infidelity that rupture the farce of family stability. Despite her own depression and unhappiness, Rui's mother will later advise her daughter to repeat her self-sacrificial example and tolerate her husband's dalliances, for appearance is more important than what her husband's actions mean. The ultimate rupture of their family's paternity occurs as Rui cedes his place as the inheritor of the family business to his brothers-in-law. The survival of the business is of greater significance than the survival of the bloodline. The capitalism of appearances and of false flows—of the external—consumes the principle of the father passing an inheritance, something meaningful, onto his son. Pseudo-sons, who are themselves of questionable repute, are more valid for a system that ranks appearance over meaning, because they give the impression of a succession while representing a rupture. They preserve the image of family progression and unity while encapsulating the defeat of the image they project. Rui's father's renouncing of his son, provoked by Rui's failed attempt at rebellion against the corporatist regime, heralds the death of two paternities in the text: the biological and the ideologi-

cal, his father and Marx. The most poignant aspect of these related collapses is that the latter is not able to offer succor to Rui for the loss of the former. His exclusion from the Communist party cell, in part for the suspected bourgeois tendencies that he supposedly inherited from his father, combines with his subsequent preemptive rejection at the hands of Marília to deny him the paternity of Marx. His abject failure—his admission that amid the Carnation Revolutionaries he was no hero—compounds his unfulfilled and unfulfillable need to grasp meaning.

Rui's two failed conjugal relationships represent his blocked interactions with ideology—through Marília and her unashamed struggle for the proletariat—and with psychology—through Tucha, whose therapist points to the grave flaws scarring Rui's psyche. Neither of these trends is able to offer meaning to Rui. They just tease him, holding out the specter of paternity for him but never ceding him any meaning—never allowing him to occupy the role of father he sought as he lay at his mother's side to console her on the nights her husband failed to come home. His desire to mimic his father, to learn how to shout and tell everyone to shut up, to be able to explain things to his own sons, is blocked by the overriding burden of his father's disowning of him. Most significantly, it is an act of disowning that excludes Rui from a cross-generational transfer of capital. The loss of inheritance and the disavowal of fatherhood do not, however, prevent the flow of capital, which merely seeks an alternative root. Rather, they strip both father and son of their power and meaning, manifested in Rui's father's impotence as the husband to a trophy wife, and Rui's self-obliteration and loss of contact with his own sons. The net effect is a total loss of paternity and the prohibition of any future paternity, for neither of them is capable of siring future sons, or providing any meaning for their sons to inherit.

Amid this loss of meaning, the role of the writing process becomes crucial. The text of the novel is itself a fragmentary fusion of constantly shifting parallel plot lines that challenges the reader to try and locate meaning. Mid-sentence, time zones are shifted and characters switched in a manner that initially confuses but then enhances the sense that Rui S.'s entire life has been the timid, repetitive search for meaning first promised but never delivered by an inadequate father. The writing process, in both the Platonic and Hegelian arguments, is to a certain extent an assurance of immortality, while paradoxically being associated, in Plato at least, with death itself. The author dies, and his dead words live on, even if they are tainted by falsehood or lack of presence. In the case of Rui, writings are left behind, including his undergraduate

thesis "D. António I, relato de um suicídio colectivo" (153) ["Dom António I, Story of a Collective Suicide"], and his later work, "Democracia e socialismo: uma confusão a evitar" (154) ["Democracy and Socialism: A Confusion to be Avoided"], which questioned his own fervent dialectical materialism and earned a citation by the Bishop of Braga in an Easter Homily, an ironic gesture whereby the errant and faithless son, Rui, whose demise is related during his own version of an Easter weekend, is appropriated by a spiritual father in order to establish meaning for a congregation. But Rui's meaning is, as signposted by his undergraduate thesis, intricately linked to suicide, and here is where Lobo Antunes's comments on the subject in an interview with Mário Ventura in the run-up to the book's launching (but published in 1986) become pertinent:

> Até certo ponto, um livro é um suicídio. Quer dizer: é uma possibilidade de um gajo alcançar a sensação de imortalidade. Não se encontra nenhum suicida que não tenha a sensação de imortalidade, quer dizer, o suicídio é o assassínio de outra pessoa. (Qtd. in Seixo 511)

> [Up to a certain point, a book is a suicide. That is, it gives a guy the chance to reach the sensation of immortality. And there is no such thing as a suicide which lacks the sense of immortality, that is, suicide is the murder of another person.]

Lobo Antunes establishes a series of connections that rotate around the age-old linkage between writing, death and immortality. The novelty in his argument explains one of the reasons why Rui must die and, more importantly, why he must commit suicide. Associating suicide with a positive sensation of immortality counters its association with ultimate desperation and attenuates its proscription in religious traditions that mandate eternal damnation for those who carry it out. Lobo Antunes describes it as a creative rather than destructive act of self-expression, and one that lives on eternally. Additionally, he casts it as a way of expunging the undesired other from the self. In Rui's case, suicide eliminates Rui's father from his son. It is an act that cleanses the compromises of the past, both the symbolic and real father who propagated the symbolic father.

As Rui S. expunges the paternal in a self-destructive and, if we are to accept Lobo Antunes's reasoning, self-perpetuating feat, what will replace the space traditionally occupied by the symbolic father in Portuguese society? Here

Lobo Antunes offers a stark portrait of how society could be restructured to configure a new axis of desire, no longer dependent on a figure of authority.

In Lobo Antunes's world, as Rui's end nears and his stream-of-consciousness becomes an increasingly literal circus, the spectacle of his demise is accompanied by a string of brutal commercials, associated with sex as a pleasurable commodity that demands capitalist consumption and often restricts reproduction. From the "inimigo número um do crescimento demográfico" (211) ["number-one enemy of population growth" (213)], Donald's condoms and Ejaculal Cream "que aumentará facilmente o comprimento do seu pénis em três centímetros e meio" (215) ["guaranteed to increase penis size by one full inch" (218)], to Mrs. Penelope's stockings that are certain to stimulate a difference in your husband's "olhar terno" (211) ["fond look" (213)] and the "Ginásio Mão de Ferro" ["Iron Hand Gymnasium"] that will improve your epigamic appeal and, more importantly in the competitive and meaningless world order with which we are left at the end of the narrative, will render you "na praia, a inveja dos homens" (211) ["the envy of every man on the beach" (213)], the shocking commercial interventions in the spectacle of Rui's suicide designate the slide into a consumerism that dispenses with or, rather, replaces the father.[1] In this new order that rapidly fills the space left vacant by the symbolic father, you are only allowed to seduce and desire, but never to realize or produce. The new system, harshly portrayed by Lobo Antunes as his protagonist stakes a claim to perpetuity through suicide, functions through a sociological mandate to constant, repetitive and meaningless desire, a consumption that gives birth to nothing. Figures of authority—symbolic and biological fatherhood—no longer have a place in a society that bore the weight of authoritarian leaders whose primary justification was a misconceived and abusive metaphorization of what it means to be a family. However, the message that emerges from Lobo Antunes's text is far from reassuring: the perpetuity that his protagonist Rui S. asserts through suicide is in reality a fleeting, interstitial moment of relief, after the fall of the father and before the rise of brutal consumerism. Figures of consumption and paternal authority—society's future and its past—both look on in the circus of Rui's death. The immortalizing moment of suicide becomes a spectacular obliteration marking the end of one era—the paternal that policed through an over-inflated, omnipresent single image of authority—and the inception of another—that of consumption that will police through the dissipation of fragmented and distractive images that conceal where authority truly resides.

Note

[1] Richard Zenith's translations of quotes are given in brackets.

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Post-imperial Performativities: Sexual Misencounters and Engenderings of Desire in António Lobo Antunes's *Fado alexandrino*

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Abstract: This study of *Fado alexandrino* examines the representation of gender roles and sexual encounters that call into question the typical male/masculinity and female/femininity associations and challenge the heterosexual hegemonic norm. Our approach falls in line with Judith Butler's conceptualization of gender identity and the work of Luce Irigaray on female sexuality as a means to explore the parodic empowering of masculinized women, the greater visibility of "alternative" sexualities, the denigration of the female sex and the kaleidoscope of overlapping, unfulfilled political and sexual desires that fuel the narrative. In relation to the cultural opening of the mid-1970s, we analyze this renegotiation of gender and sexuality as a site for the display of a newly found freedom of expression that nonetheless privileges a masculinist narrative voice.

In Lobo Antunes's fifth novel, *Fado alexandrino* (1983), there is a short, seemingly minor episode in which one of the protagonists relates an encounter with an androgynous woman doctor: "a creature in a smock appeared, of indefinite age and more or less of the female sex in spite of the deep voice and masculine shoes [...]" (272). Although this gendered representation takes only a few lines in what is one of Lobo Antunes's most voluminous novels, it is emblematic of the author's constant, intricate toying with a no less intricate representation of gender roles and the concept of *performativity* that is central to our study. Through the recollections of four army veterans from the war in

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 97-119.
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Mozambique, *Fado alexandrino* foregrounds a multiplicity of different roles and identities that represent, as Phyllis Peres pertinently states, "seemingly different actors in supposedly different plays," but also, and foremost in our present reading, multiple engendered performances that produce an intriguing collage effect as different expressions of sexuality are portrayed (199).

Drawing on Judith Butler's now well-known theory of the "performativity of gender" and her nuanced discussion of subjects of sex/gender/desire that are at the core of her postmodern account of subjectivity, this study analyzes the complex intertwining of the protagonists of *Fado alexandrino*, with an emphasis on the sexual encounters that permeate the novel and the denaturalization of the associations man/masculinity and woman/femininity.[1] Butler rejects the very possibility of stable gender identities from which acts would proceed, and as such, there is no fixed continuum between sex, desire and gender (Butler, "Subjects" 3-44). Her work argues that the notion of belonging to a sex or gender can be problematized, not only due to distinct historical or cultural interpretations but also because gender is an effect performatively produced through a citational process of non-identical re-enactments.[2] Perhaps more explicit of this aspect is Butler's rewording of her theorization in the essay "Performative Acts," where she explains:

> As a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual [...]. The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pregiven cultural relations [...] so the gendered body *acts* its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and *enacts* interpretations within the confines of already existing directives. ("Performative" 410; emphasis added.)

In *Fado alexandrino* bodily acts, interpretations and "inscriptions" provide a fertile site to explore the gendered performances that challenge the expectations of the masculinity/femininity binary. In this text Lobo Antunes satirizes the typical heterosexual matrix—that which Adrienne Rich refers to as "compulsory heterosexuality"—and portrays, with increasing intensity as the novel progresses, gender as an artifice, disengaged from the sexed body and even defying the presumption of the immutable character of sex (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 26).[3] Working along the discontinuity of sex and culturally constructed gender, heterosexuality with its "discrete and asymmetrical

oppositions between 'feminine' and 'masculine' [...] understood as expressive attributes of 'male' and 'female'" is set against homo- and trans-sexualizations of desire (23). This portrayal of gender identities as open or incomplete on the one hand, and an apparent emergence of non-heterosexual practices on the other, corresponds to a more liberal/liberated political scene present in Portugal from the mid-1970s onwards. As a consequence, complex male/female or same-sex relationships are constantly confronted with a fear of displacement that is intensified by the post-imperial setting of the novel and a tenuous and fundamentally ambivalent struggle for identity as the protagonists are torn between the life-changing experience of the colonial war and the necessity to become reintegrated into the civilian way of life in Lisbon. Through a pervasively masculinist discourse, that in parts echoes a bourgeois (Catholic) ideology, the alternating male protagonists impart their view and expectations of a phallogocentric economy of sexuality and their earnest effort to re-establish the hegemonic "center" of heterosexual satisfaction and male dominance.

1. Women on Top

The narrative of *Fado alexandrino* is divided into three chronological sections (before, during and after the Revolution) that are recounted through the reminiscing and pseudo-confessional discourse of four army comrades to their captain during a battalion reunion dinner and the continuation of the continuation of an increasingly drunken evening. Among those present are a soldier, a communications officer, a second lieutenant, a lieutenant colonel and their captain.[4] The complex "intersections" of the *fado* can be summarized as follows: the lieutenant colonel Artur Esteves, widowed upon returning from the war in Mozambique, has a purely sexual relationship with his concierge, then marries Édite, "the cloud of perfume," before having an affair with Lucília, a young clerk from his wife's boutique who exploits and cheats on him with younger men and later dies of typhus; the second lieutenant Jorge is married to Inês, a young girl from an extremely well-to-do family who cheats on her husband with Ilka, "the purple-haired lady"; Inês at the end of the narrative is in a relationship with the lieutenant colonel's daughter, Maria João; Jorge, having lost his wife to her lesbian lover Ilka, has an affair with one of his coworkers, Ilda, and at the end of the novel has moved in with a midget who is a gynecologist, reassured that no one could possibly desire her; the soldier Abílio marries Odete, his uncle Ilídio's step-daughter, who later leaves him for a communist partisan; the communications officer, who lusts timidly after

Odete (Abílio's wife) in her role as an undercover communist agent named Dália, has an affair with Édite, the neglected lieutenant colonel's wife; the captain plays the role of the (mostly) silent listener of the comrades' stories and is the principal narrator of the text, offering commentaries on the disjointed kaleidoscopic reconstruction of the colonial/metropolitan adventures of his comrades.

The male protagonists put into relief the different angles of interwoven discourses with an emphasis on their ostensibly inconclusive sexual and affective relationships. This pervasive feeling of ineptness and failure is perceived as concurrent to a shift from male to female dominance in the individual relationships that can be interpreted as representative of a more widespread transition in gender roles. As Maria Alzira Seixo has pointed out, in *Fado alexandrino* "é a mulher relegada que justamente, de certa forma, comanda os dados narrativos" (118). Chronologically speaking, one of the first emblematic scenes portrays Inês losing her virginity to Jorge in a pine grove, a scene that becomes all the more important in the narrative through its numerable references. The episode foregrounds female pain and dishonor as initial teasing gives way to forceful penetration. Throughout this passage, the emphasis is on Jorge's physical pleasure, his erection, his underwear damp with desire, fondling her with his eager fingers and his lack of reasoning in the heat of the moment set against the symbolic "swelling up" of the throat of the swimming pool in the background, in contrast to Inês's fear, distress and cries of "Stop it you beast you animal I don't want to let me go" (41). Jorge vividly recalls how, at the conclusion of this scene, Inês's vagina expelled his penis leaving "on the tip, the little drop of bright crimson varnish, a brushstroke of blood" (95). It is interesting to note that this episode can be read as a *mise en abîme* of the development of Jorge and Inês's relationship that shifts from Jorge's dominant physical pleasure ("Go down"; "Drink me"; "Grab it"; 32-36) to him ultimately being expulsed; his penis is rejected, both symbolically and literally, as she turns to a lesbian lover. When the Revolution erupts, Jorge flees to Brazil with his wife and her family and in the new surroundings, displaced from the fatherland and the law of the Father, the heterosexual Jorge/Inês relationship is fully substituted by the Inês/Ilka affair.

In contrast to Lobo Antunes's previous novels, in *Fado alexandrino* not only are women more prominent, but they are also empowered at the expense of their passive male partners.[5] This behavior likewise contributes to a feeling of disorientation in what has traditionally been a male hegemonic

culture, from both the standpoint of the Portuguese military in the war in Mozambique and that of the metropolis in accordance with Salazar's treatment of gender roles under the Estado Novo. The submissive role assigned to women by the Salazar regime was supposedly based on their "natural sexual difference and for the good of the family"—aimed to anchor women in a socially and politically docile position.[6] Consequentially, as most predominantly expressed in the third section of the novel in question, the return of the battalion requires an adaptation to a new dynamic of gender roles that the veterans perceive as disturbing. Several telling examples will serve as illustrative of this trait shared by the main female protagonists of the novel.

The cosmetics consultant Édite, more commonly referred to by the fitting hyperbolic epithet "the cloud of perfume," proposes marriage to the lieutenant colonel and gives him a deadline of a week to live with her (330). Abílio, in his relationship with the concierge, submissively lets himself be smothered by her keenness to "mother" him, to mend and launder his clothes, and also moves in with her. In the same spirit, the strong-willed bookkeeper of the furniture moving company quits her job when she cannot convince Abílio's uncle to "hook up with her" (332). Yet without a doubt the most striking example of a domineering female is Jorge's inopportune and overpowering mother-in-law. Her phallacized voice, "the disagreeable, masculine, authoritarian voice" that cut "through [Jorge's] skull like an incandescent dagger" (39), explodes the traditional masculine/feminine binary, as does the demeanor with which she bosses her husband about and repeatedly reminds him of his worthlessness. The effaced paternal figure inspires Jorge's pity, "so useless, so pathetic, so worthless, so extinct, condemned to stroll like a shadow through the enormous rooms or draining melancholy whiskeys in front of the defunct television set" (96). When the Revolution is in full swing, Jorge's mother-in-law patently treats her husband with utter contempt, as visible in the following passage: "And to her husband, secondary, small, useless, huddled in his easy chair with a glass of cognac forgotten beside him, tuning the volume of the anthems on the radio: 'Come, Jaime, get a move on, take care of things, don't sit there like a frightened rag doll, like an ape, it's beginning to look as if you want them to put us in jail. I still wonder, word of honor, why I ever married a lump like you'" (190-91). After the matriarch's death by pancreatic cancer, the father-in-law's newly found liberation is expressed by his marriage to the housekeeper, "a short little woman with a mustache who at that time at least didn't boss him around:

I'll bet he took the servant to city hall like somebody going to Fátima, on his knees, thankful for a miracle" (39).

In these last two examples in particular one can question the caricatural depiction of these masculinized women. Set against the socio-political circumstances of the fall of Fascism, we are reminded that the aftermath of the revolution gave greater power to women only *in theory*. As Ana Paula Ferreira has discussed, "regardless of democratic laws and the efforts of recently formed women's groups to raise public consciousness, deeply rooted beliefs and cultural practices prevented any effective changes from taking place, whether in the so-called private or public spheres" (222). Or, as explicitly denoted in the novel's epigraph, taken from a Paul Simon song, "after changes we are more or less the same." We can therefore conclude that, in relation to women within this farcical revolutionary scenario, *Fado alexandrino* portrays their masculinization as the only means to access a real political, domestic and social voice that they obtain through the subversion of their gender.

2. Alternative sexualities

As the novel progresses through the different sections of the narrative, what Foucault coined "peripheral sexualities" become increasingly present in the text (39-40). It is as though lesbianism, gay homoerotica, transsexualism and transvestism, by becoming symbolically more visible and literally replacing former heterosexual relationships as a search for unrequited desires, are emblematic of a greater freedom of expression that can be perceived on both a social and literary plane. Eduardo Lourenço identifies a "new cultural space" in the early eighties in Portugal when works dealing with previously tabooed matter and the Revolution itself began to emerge (7-16). *Fado alexandrino*, published during that time period, most certainly attests to the cultural liberation ostensibly present in the overt sexual content of the text.

The narrative projects the passing regime of a no longer immovable patriarchal order embodied by the fall of the Salazar/Caetano government, and this overthrow of dictatorial patriarchy is simultaneous with a greater visibility of "other" sexualities that call into question compulsory heterosexuality, dispelling all illusions of stable sex, gender and identity. The events of the Revolution itself are muted in the background of the novel as the protagonists relate their personal crises that are circumstantially reinforced by a feeling of temporal and geographic displacement in the post-colonial

setting of the metropolis. The destabilization of the continuum sex, gender and desire adds to this already overwhelming sense of estrangement.

Perhaps one of the most striking contrasts of this demise of the law of the Father is the above-mentioned rejection of Jorge by his wife Inês and her relationship with Ilka. Jorge's annulment becomes obsessively present in his confessional discourse as he constantly juxtaposes both relationships and their respective hetero- or homosexuality. Jorge's perplexity as the rejected husband is amplified by his incomprehension at having become the displaced subject of a desire that—to draw from Lacan—requires the presence and reflection of the Other, as its absence or lack, to confirm his "having" of the phallus. Inês no longer regards him as the beholder of the phallus, nor does she choose to supply the site to which it penetrates, inevitably provoking the destabilization of Jorge's identity (Lacan 83-85). Explicitly represented in the constant comparison of both relationships is Jorge's castration anxiety—once "having" the phallus and now fearing its loss—that is here wielded by his non-acceptance of the lesbian phallus in the Inês/Ilka relationship (Butler, *Bodies* 84).

Jorge's interpretation of his wife's lesbianism further denounces her relationship with Ilka as one of masquerade, representing what Judith Butler theorizes as "a feminine desire which would establish an insubordinate alterity to the masculine subject and expose the necessary failure of masculinity" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 61). From Jorge's masculinist point of view, his wife's lesbianism is the refusal of sexuality *per se*, as presumed heterosexuality; he is being rejected and relegated, both literally and figuratively, to the position of an observer.[8] His anguish is expressed by his physical repudiation towards the female sex. Obsessively, his fear spills over into his unconscious as his own (heterosexual) affair with his co-worker Ilda and his wife's affair with Ilka become uncannily one (198). This sexual blurring reaches its pinnacle at the conclusion of the novel, where the merging of the couples is even more disturbing as the scenes move from one couple to the next with graphic sexual content leaving Jorge with an intensified sense of fear and nausea.[9]

Another prominent depiction of "alternative" sexuality in *Fado alexandrino* corresponds to the relationship formed by the soldier Abílio, the blond painter, and his Senegalese lover Désiré, which foregrounds and internally questions the dynamics of homosexuality in the post-revolutionary process. If in Portugal sexual minority practices and homosexuality in particular were considered for over seventy years a crime, during the regeneration following the Revolution there was a re-evaluation of the sexual codes the country had lived with

for decades.[10] As a consequence, the period of transition from dictatorship to democracy witnessed a greater awareness of homoerotica in a period of progressive cultural liberation. During the reunion dinner, the army comrades discuss this "abrupt" display of homosexuality, as voiced by the second lieutenant's comment that his neighborhood had "got full of faggotry all of a sudden" (39). The lieutenant's neighbors, a "fag painter and his black lover from Senegal who babbled French and stumbled over the words" (39), represent this seemingly rapid appearance of "faggotry" in the urban post-imperial setting.

In relation to the concept of lusotropicalism, whereby colonized spaces represent uterine topoi, Luís Madureira discusses the reversal of the gendered tropical topoi in the work of Lobo Antunes—the substitution of "an image of colonialism as impregnation with that of colonialism as 'sodomy'" (25). Madureira's enlightening discussion focuses predominantly on Lobo Antunes's novel *Os cus de Judas*, with the exception of a reference to Abílio in *Fado alexandrino* alleviating his sexual frustration at the sentry post of the native village, "with a machine gun in the right hand and money in the other [...] to get into the fart-hole of a dumb nigger" (70). In yet a different twist, this analogy is extendable to the urban context of the novel where, in the post-colonial setting, Abílio, who once was in a position to *pay* the sodomized twenty contos, finds himself now at the bottom end of the urban class system, and is transformed from sodomizer into sodomized in his relationship with the Senegalese busker and the blond painter (59-60).

Through Abílio's confession, we learn that after his first chance encounter with the painter, when he happened to be commissioned to move his furniture (one of the many intricate interconnections and chance encounters woven throughout *Fado alexandrino*), if he wanted money to take Odete out, to the movies, for a walk, to the beach, then he would pay the painter a visit. Abílio confesses: "Once we were in bed and right then and there the black man showed up, stripped, dancing, with marks and spirals in chalk drawn on his chest, and he crawled in between the sheets too, squealing: I earned a conto taking care of that queer pussycat couple who would scratch each other, tinkling bracelets, feeling their behinds, biting each other's neck, meowing in French. Naturally, I never mentioned that to Odete, I'd have sunk into the ground if I ever thought she might have guessed" (64). Apparent in this complex hetero-homo matrix is the fact that the homo-prostitution fuels the money into the hetero-relationship. Yet what is certainly more complex is that in this bizarre *ménage-à-trois* that supplies Abílio with the

funds to court his girlfriend, the soldier becomes despite himself caught in the middle, both emotionally and physically: "Désiré loved to dress up as a woman and spin around on the carpet, with long fingernails, high heels, and a wig, smoking American cigarettes in a tortoiseshell holder, and the man would shove me away to grab him, shrieking in an excited way Je t'aime je t'aime je t'aime" (65).

The descriptions of the painter and Désiré translate a challenge to existing ontological assumptions about gender arrangements in distinct manners. For Désiré, temporary cross-dressing appears to be little more than a playful masquerade to create an effect of erotic "naughtiness" that, through his obvious hyperbolic femininity and the kitsch staging, toys with the heterosexual economy of desire. The connotations of the black man's name draw on the meaning of being desired as a male object of desire; however, the fact that the name "Désiré" is most often used in its female form "Désirée" skillfully coalesces both genders.[11] Regarding the "old man," the detailed description that the soldier relates to the Captain focuses on the painter's clear attempts to become feminized through bodily transformations: "his plump thighs lying on the sheet, [...] the grayish clump of dying hair of his pubes, smothering a prick in its blond-dyed tangle, and then the protruding stomach, the woman's breasts, the round absence of muscles" (106).

Seen through the eyes of Abílio, the named sexed bodily parts in this anatomic description (pubes, penis, breasts...) point to a restrictive categorization of the erogenous body and a fragmentation of the sexed body as a whole, defying the categories of sex as coherent and unified. As Wittig demonstrates, the integrity of the sexed body serves the purposes of fragmentation, restriction and domination that here are removed by this "overthrow" of universal signifying sexual parts (9-20). It is as though the painter's "imaginary condition of desire" has exceeded his physical body, that to conform to such desires required some exaggerated and other diminished bodily parts.[12] If on the one hand Désiré fantasizes that he can become a phallic woman by cross-dressing in a fetishistic ritual, the painter gives the soldier fetishistic orders, such as leaving on his shoes and socks (204). The soldier's position is truly significant in that he becomes the painter's object of desire, replacing Désiré (203). At the anticlimactic climax of this bizarre love triangle that merges prostitutional and domestic spheres, the painter turns up dead in Cruz Quebrada on the outskirts of Lisbon and Désiré is arrested for the crime. If the narrative portrays the soldier's relationship with the gay couple

as a duty performed "gritting his teeth," in the scenes that are related following the painter's assassination Abílio continues to explore what he refers to as an amusing and lucrative avenue "in urinals and public parks," thus moving his private "moonshining" activities into an anonymous public sphere (209). It also becomes apparent that Abílio's nocturnal activities are not exclusively about financial gain but are also driven by libidinal and affective motives. As the soldier states, "it wasn't always for money [...] it was out of friendship too, out of companionship in loneliness" (210).

In this night arena, the narrator emphasizes Abílio's intermingling with transvestites, "sexless amphibian animals" (209) whose appearance, gestures and voices, progressively, as the hours roll on, once again become masculine and decisive. This overtly theatrical masquerade, to draw from Butler, "implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender identity" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 137). In this context of the novel, the performative nature of gender is reified by the contents of the transvestites' compartments: "fearsome piles of men's and women's clothing everywhere, dresses, shoes, pants, neckties, a kind of truss to flatten and hide testicles and penis, mirrors with light bulbs all around like theater dressing rooms, and lots of bottles and flasks and atomizers and hooks and razors and photographs cut from magazines" (210). What becomes explicit is the distinction between the "contingent dimensions of significant corporeality," to quote once again from Butler, that are here played upon: the maleness (of the anatomical sex), the feminine gender performance (displayed in the temporary impersonation), and gender identity (heterosexuality versus homosexuality). This feminine performative *mise en scène* culminates in Abílio's experience with Tó Zé, "from a good family, son of an engineer, who wanted to be a dancer" (210), "an accident, foolishness" that Abílio confesses, to the disgust of those present during the battalion reunion: "He [Tó Zé]'d had paraffin injected into his breasts to give them shape, he had almost no balls, almost no dick, a little bulge, a few stringy hairs and nothing else, maybe you won't believe me, but it was practically like being with a woman, believe me, the same smell of the flesh as with women, the same moans, the same movements" (210). In contrast to Désiré and the transvestites of the Cais de Sodré, Tó Zé marks the opposite pole of male subjectivity. Whereas the male cross-dresser or transvestite can be perceived as representing, as Robert J. Stoller suggests, "the extreme limit case of 'male subjectivity,' 'proving' that he is male against the most extraordinary odds," the male transsexual "does not wish to be a phallic woman; he wishes to be a biologically normal woman"

(Stoller 186; Garber 96). Pertinent to the description of Tó Zé is the conviction that the penis, "the absolute insignia of maleness," and his quest to annul this false sign of gender identity govern his subjectivity (186).

These different forms of engendered performativities transgress the idea of fixed norms of sex, gender and sexuality by flaunting disobedience to a heterosexual, binary framework. Whether it is a partial sex change, a temporary mimicry of the opposite (female) sex, or a blatant effacement of a heterosexual paradigm, Lobo Antunes emblematizes the liberatory desire to reconceive gender identities. In this post-Revolutionary era, these newly constructed identities constitute the epitome of post-modern sexuality by exploding the anxieties of binarity and revealing the essential constructedness or performance of gender. Alongside the denaturalization of heterosexuality that the novel sets center-stage through an explosion of sexual discourses and alternative engenderings of desire, the text also denigrates female sex and sexuality, an important aspect of the novel that we will now address.

3. Abject (female) sex

As our analysis has outlined so far, the novel works from the viewpoint of the hegemonic heterosexual male discourse and as a consequence other forms of sexuality are presented as marginalized or outright abnormal. This is blatantly visible, for example, in relation to the Jorge/Inês/Ilka triangle of which there is a one-sided account that focuses on Inês's lesbian relationship perceived through Jorge's narrative voice: "She must have a rotten body, Inês, withered breasts, varicose veins, disgusting folds in her belly, what charm can you find in that crocodile, why do her gray-haired pubes attract you?" (313). This spiteful description of an alternative economy of sexual pleasures independent of the heterosexual attraction views lesbian erotics as abject, valorizing, precisely, the purple-haired lady's rotten body. This rottenness brings to mind Plato's *Timaeus* and the concept that "in the absence of men, women's sexual functioning is aimless and unproductive, merely a form of rottenness and decay" (qtd. in Lauretis 19). This notion is all the more telling here in that, in Jorge's view, Inês has chosen rottenness and decay over heterosexuality and legitimacy.

As a stereotypical topic of male conversation, references to female sex and sexuality constitute a significant portion of the confessional discourse of the battalion members. Focusing on the female genitalia as emblematic of that Other sex, Jorge compares Inês's pubes to a "damp, resting hedgehog which

was licking his fingers with the tender membranes of its mouth" (38). In similar circumstances, the (male) narrator draws attention to her "long biological-science-book mammoth hairs of the vulva" (163). Likewise, Inês is compared to a toad and a turtle, specifically as she lies on the conjugal bed.[13] At one point, in reference to Ilda, the smell of female sexual discharge is likened to "rotting canned cuttlefish" (192), as Jorge ponders on why he doesn't enjoy making love to her. Later, a similar reference is made in relation to the "cloud of perfume" by Artur who, once he is able to cure his urea and is at last able to perform sexually, sees Édite as a "beached codfish" (312).

If the novel caricatures female sex and sexuality, there is also throughout a phallocentric censoring of female sexual pleasure. Emblematic of this is Jorge's fear of Ilda reaching orgasm and how that affects his sexual enjoyment, as though he were repulsed by her female pleasure, so blatantly fitting with the masculinist view of sex that is constant throughout the narrative (194). If on the one hand Jorge struggles to find sexual fulfillment with his lover Ilda, as the cuckold husband that has been replaced by his wife's lesbian lover, his conjugal sex is also deeply amiss. Trapped economically as his job at the bank depends on his wife's family, he mentally strives to block out his wife's lesbianism and accept at face value the excuses Inês and Ilka utter when he catches them in *flagrant délit*. In almost complete denial, he comments: "their bodies tight together, the old woman's purple locks mingled with Inês's light brown hair, fingers with long nails interlaced and letting go, cooing, whispering, giggling. You might find it strange but by the following week I'd almost completely forgotten the matter and we even made love from time to time on weekends in silent and mediocre pleasure" (247). He justifies being rejected by his wife and his denial of her lesbianism by his humble background "I'd tried to fly too high for my wings [...] it was only right for me to screw myself up a little, it was only right for me to learn, at my own expense, what I really was: a lump, the son of an old typesetter, an innocent boob just drifting along" (247). Jorge's low self-esteem and the economical/sexual humiliation that he suffers culminate in their symbolic departure from Inês's family home at Carcavelos when there is news that political turmoil is underway: Jorge relates how Inês rode in front of him with her lesbian lover in the white Alfa Romeo "with the air of an owner" and he followed their exhaust behind, "as an underling, or just a piece of shit, or a servant" (251).

At the purple lady's residence, the feeling of humiliation and effacement is prolonged further as Ilka ambiguously offers her servant's "availability" if

Jorge would need some "scrambled eggs," orders him to buy cigarettes for her, as she frolics with Inês (314).[14] Deeply perplexed, years later Jorge continues to wonder what his ex-wife saw in that old lady with "shriveled legs, shriveled breasts, the shriveled neck of a chicken [...] what kind of shit draws you to her?" (254).[15] Even more intriguing is the fact that there is a clear reversal of gender roles from one relationship to the other: whereas Inês treats Jorge with contempt and authority, taking a domineering stand, with Ilka she takes the submissive position.

This dissonant juxtaposition, transposed within the lesbian economy, portrays Ilka as identified with masculinity in a play of masculine and feminine that destabilizes both terms as they come into erotic play. This butch/femme dynamic is expressed by reference to their laughter, the purple-haired woman's "unexpected masculine laugh" in contrast to Inês's submissive one (256). Inês's affair with Ilka is channeled through Jorge's phallogocentric point of view and as such he interprets his wife's lesbianism in relation to heterosexual norms. Butler addresses this complex identification of lesbian desires in relation to the heterosexual paradigm when she states:

> The idea that butch and femme are in some sense "replicas" or "copies" of heterosexual exchange underestimates the erotic signification of these identities as internally dissonant and complex in their resignification of the hegemonic categories by which they are enabled. Lesbian femmes may recall the heterosexual scene, as it were, but also displace it at the same time. (*Gender Trouble* 157)

In the narrative, this "displacement" can be perceived at several levels as Jorge becomes the outsider, a *persona non grata*. Furthermore, in comparison to the hegemonic patriarchal structure, Inês and Ilda's affair appears all the more "subversive" by being situated beyond the paternal law as Inês's parents are completely oblivious to, or choose to ignore, their daughter's relationship, which they discredit on religious grounds given the fact that even before they fled to Brazil "they went to Fátima together to the candlelight procession" (314).

Only the conclusion of the Inês/Ilda relationship provides a short-lived comfort to Jorge. As he sarcastically relates when Inês and her family return to Portugal, the "purple haired lady" stayed behind in São Paulo "shacking up with an ex-nun who would parade in the Rio carnival dressed as a man" (426). As is characteristic of *Fado alexandrino*, when it appears that there could be nothing more "obscure" or alternative to the heterosexual

norm, expectancies are pushed to their extreme limit as in this reference to the Carnival cross-dressing lesbian ex-nun that portrays the epitome of gender obscurity and hegemonic transgression. Jorge's effacement is further reinforced when, years later, he goes to visit his daughter and finds his ex-wife with a new lesbian lover (who also happens to be the lieutenant colonel's daughter), showing impudent signs of affection going at each other like "hungry insects" (427), as if he and their daughter Mariana were not present. However, as the second lieutenant's confession becomes progressively more intimate, he admits that despite his fury, picturing his ex-wife with her lover left him sexually excited (427).

Likewise, another relationship that concludes with the rejection of the male partner is the one between Abílio and Odete, who doubles as Dália, the communications officer's secret contact. After they are married and Odete becomes pregnant, she rejects him sexually and treats him as a "full-fledged idiot," which she justifies by his lack of culture and disinterest in reading (258). Interestingly, in Abílio's case, though the humiliation started almost immediately after they are married and his wife "shows him to be the piece of shit he was" (258), once she becomes pregnant, in true bovaresque fashion he is completely rejected and becomes "a bothersome guest" (267) in his own house and in his own bed. What is apparent here is that Odete's pregnancy coincides with the sexual rejection of her husband, most certainly an indication of the fact that she already has a lover and no longer needs to go through the conjugal motions to mask what would then appear as an illegitimate pregnancy.

Nonetheless, Abílio voices his attempt to keep his dignity by justifying his self-sufficiency through sexual difference: "I stick my diddly up my own ass, Odete, but what do you want to do with the hairy space between your thighs where I can't get lost, can't sink in?" (270).[16] Relating this passage to the writings of Luce Irigaray allows us to contrast this masculinist view with her feminist perspective, according to which female sexuality has the potentiality, on the contrary, to exist autonomously beyond the law of the phallus. In particular, in the now classic text *This Sex Which is Not One*, Irigaray attempts to articulate feminine sexuality and sexual pleasure beyond the realm of discourse produced by men. Abílio's rhetorical interjection expresses the very negation of this female autonomous homo- or autoeroticism.

The disavowal of female sexual autonomy and pleasure and the unilateral view of male sexual dominance as viewed by Abílio in the above-mentioned passage, as well as the general comments of the other army comrades perva-

sively expressed throughout the novel, are temporarily reversed in the only section of *Fado alexandrino* that takes a female narrative voice. Esmeralda, an "old maid" who lives with the communications officer and his godmother behind the Feira Popular amusement park, narrates the section in question.[17] Although Esmeralda is a secondary protagonist who is introduced at the beginning of the novel (in the third chapter of the first section entitled "Before the Revolution"), this chapter which is the only one to allow a female narrative voice, symbolically constitutes the penultimate chapter of the last section, "After the Revolution."

As Maria Alzira Seixo observes, this chapter has a poetic dimension that further sets it apart from the other narrative voices.[18] It is as though in order for Esmeralda to have a voice, it must distinguish itself from the mainstream narration, the true History told by men. The positioning of the section and its inherent significance project the importance for women to finally express their point of view on the topic of female sexuality, as the last part of this section suggests: "and maybe all women know the same thing I know and are afraid to confess it to other women because they don't know if they know and they're afraid of disbelief and mockery, or because men make us that way out of relief and defense" (477). Esmeralda's autobiographical account focuses on the physical and emotional abuse of having been successively raped. She arrives at the bitter conclusion "that all men are like each other in their depression and their weakness, that they all try to delve into our insides with the keys hanging from their bellies, to deposit in us the drop of snot that they're made of, and they all get dressed without looking at us, getting tangled up in the dozens of buttons on their clothes, leaving right away, furtively, like thieves of our bodies, thieves of the dull pleasure they'd had" (477).

Esmeralda's narrative portrays women as dispensable inferior sex objects at the mercy of domineering men, and this feeling of anguish and hatred provokes the physical, sexual and emotive closing of her body to men. The closing of the lips between her legs "with the soft and insistent selfishness of corollas" after her stepfather pierced and perforated her is the literal and symbolic representation of this conscious withdrawal from the realm of male dominated sexuality. As such, Esmeralda considers masturbation the only alternative to an abusive, sexual dead-end for women within the patriarchal impositions of forceful heterosexuality. The description of her autonomous autoeroticism portrays *jouissance* "without hatred finally, devoid of rancor" (470). Esmeralda's perception of heterosexuality, conditioned by her unfortunate experi-

ences, leaves her with a feeling of utter disgust for sex with men. Her depiction of male anatomy and their genitalia in particular, along with her view of their grotesque sexual tactics, emphasizes images of nausea, death, sterility and dryness (470). This vilified picture of male sexuality reaches its epitome in the humiliation she suffers at the mercy of the husband of the "Lady" for whom she works in Lisbon. Emphasizing the closure of her body, Esmeralda relates her boss's husband forcefully trying, in vain, to penetrate her, his "enormous hernia of a testicle that made him try to penetrate sideways, unsuccessfully, the closed corolla of [her] womb" (473). Even after his death, she still pictures: "the desperate efforts of the dead man to penetrate her thighs without an opening, the sealing wax of her vagina, the spiral lips of her womb" (473).

In the context of *Fado alexandrino*, and on a greater scale, also that of the majority of Lobo Antunes's novels, this unique section stands as one of the only passages to take a female voice to explicitly portray female sexuality.[19] This section simultaneously inscribes and questions the viability of the female condition in what is an apparently unbendable phallocentric system. Placed following this polyphonic labyrinth of male voices that constitute the majority of the novel, Esmeralda's narrative confronts and negates the previous male-sided accounts, though by the same token it also appears as merely one against many, confined to a chapter whose textual existence is contained in a manner similar to that of its oppressed tangential speaking subject who is only temporarily provided with the power of self-expression. Esmeralda ends her days as an "old maid" in a home for the elderly, where she progressively sinks deeper and deeper into silence, madness and oblivion.

This withdrawal echoes Irigaray's discussion on female sexuality as nothing but a muted threat: "as long as she is not a 'subject', so long as she cannot disrupt through her speech, her desire, her pleasure, the operation of the language that lays down the law, the prevailing organization of power [...] there is, for women, no possible law for their pleasure. No more than there is any possible discourse" (95). On the one hand, because of her silence, Esmeralda can no longer be even symbolically a discursive challenge to patriarchy as she recedes into an enclosed society in order to elude submission to male-supremacist oppression. Her sterile womb also removes her further from any "rightful" participation in sexuality, a sexual nonexistence that Lacan relates directly to mothering.[20] On all accounts, Esmeralda's narrative as the creation of a new discourse to confront sexual discrimination on the grounds of gender inequality is but a passing attempt.

4. In/conclusive Sexual Dissatisfaction

Other than the above-discussed thwarted negotiation with phallogocentrism, there seems to be another important challenge to this "norm" and "center" that seconds Esmeralda's female narrative attempt of revenge on male-dominated heterosexuality: male sexual dissatisfaction. In particular, the topic of dismal sexuality is constantly related to lieutenant colonel Artur Esteves's sexual impotence (or fear of impotence), perceived as a lack of virility. In references to Artur—more so than to any of the other male protagonists of the novel—the sexual/political overlap is prominent. The obsessively repeated torments "Am I still capable?" "Can I still do it?" and the untiring efforts of the cleaning lady to excite him become a leitmotif that is repeatedly invoked in the text as Artur relates his anguish before an "inexplicable, intermittent functioning" which he attributes to his age (116).

This intermittent impotence coalesces with his political inaptness, portraying him as a political eunuch, fearful of taking a stand alongside the communist activist Captain Mendes and other revolutionaries who want to bring down the dictatorship, and who also refuse to support the Caetano government. The political shame of indecisiveness and inactivity is embodied in the "soft, sad little thing, an insignificant little trunk, a piece of cylindrical skin, worthless" (116). Interestingly, in these as in many other passages, the sexual/political crisscrossing is apparent at the narrative level—the uncanny blending of political with personal and sexual[21]—as well as on a semantic level, through the adaptation of hybrid expressions such as "the revolutionary hard-ons" (276), symbolic once again of dominant, phallic power, but a power that will be short-lived.[22]

Artur's fear of impotence continues into his next sexual relationship with the "cloud of perfume," Édite, where he fears that he will likewise "cut the usual sad figure [he does] with the concierge" (294). In the first scene with Édite, his paranoia is couched in the distortedly exaggerated vision of the bed as she lures him into her room, like a spider to her web: "and just as the lieutenant feared, the rectangular, gigantic, huge bed, raised up on a kind of altar or platform with two carpeted steps, the lace bedspread, puffy-cheeked twin pillows leaning against one another like loving heads" (295-96). The "cloud of perfume" deals with his humiliation in a condescending maternal way ("Mama's going to make you big in a minute" [304]), blatantly performing her role as a sexual instrument whose function is to enlarge and to excite the man, focusing solely on size and performance.

In this as in other episodes, what is apparent is the emphasis on the phallic, masculinist discourse of male pleasure; yet, for the most part, these desires remain unsatisfied. Most emblematic of this is the relationship between the communications officer and Dália, Odete's political identification. The communications officer's complete lack of courage, his erotic and obsessive fantasying to "shit on socialism, lift up [her] skirts, lie down on the grass, hold what [he] can feel growing in [his] shorts and stick it in [her] with a short, hoarse, isolated animal grunt, into [her] hold" remains but an unsatisfied urge as he, and her legal husband Abílio, both take second place to Lenin (274). The communications officer's need for sexual pleasure likewise revolves around the phallus and the objectification of the woman as the sheath; far from being interested in her ideological ideas, it is sexual gratification that he seeks, as expressed in the following passage: "I've got such a craving for your fingers to go up and down my fleshy piston, eagerly, slowly, deliciously" (273). Nothing, however, will come of his sexual cravings towards Dália, and he ends up having an affair with Édite, the lieutenant colonel's wife, who is also sexually unsatisfied. Similarly, the lieutenant colonel's daughter, though only a minor protagonist in the novel, will prefer the Cambodian revolution to her husband. She considers herself a feminist and ultimately has a relationship, through a convoluted twist of circumstances, with Jorge's ex-wife Inês, leaving her husband in distress and faced with the realities of their daily existence, the fact that they "just bought an apartment and haven't yet paid off the car loan" (280).

Perhaps the pinnacle of sexual misencounters is the second lieutenant's experience working in an ornithological laboratory for a Lebanese biologist whose specialty is nothing less obscure than the sexual aberrations of geese and the post-masturbatory melancholy of owls (374). Particularly symbolic in this passage is the fantastical transformation of Jorge from laboratory worker to object of sexual analysis, becoming himself a bird and a specimen of biological research, emblematic of his feeling of social and sexual misidentification following his wife's consumed lesbianism. He ends up overcoming his hallucinations and becoming the lover of a midget, with the assurance that "at least with this one there's no danger, who's going to love her" (434). The cruel description of the midget is extremely grotesque: "microscopic arms and legs, a huge head sitting on an almost nonexistent body, tiny, ugly, disagreeable, misshapen, poorly dressed, you" (433). The description of the "nonexistent body" of the midget leans towards a de-gendered figure that would "fall out-

side the human, constituting the domain of the dehumanized and the abject against which the human itself is constituted (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 142).

In the battalion gathering, Jorge comments on her genitalia and sexuality with equal ruthlessness, portraying her to be somewhat of a sexual curiosity, representative of all midgets: "their vaginas are just the same, it's just that they wiggle more, get worked up more, are more like caterpillars, more insatiable, have more pleasure" (433). In a bizarre metonymical delusion, the second lieutenant *becomes* the midget, which once again points to "its" de-gendered constitution. He only regains his manliness when he begins the process of his morning shave, a culturally marked ritual that allows him to take on the shape and size of a man (436). It is as though the sexual relationship with the midget transforms him, de-genders him, destabilizes the binary oppositional masculine/female relation between him and his partner, only to regain his own identity once he has accomplished his manly morning rituals and is about to leave the house. Following the night with the officers, it is also this tragicomical scene that will greet Jorge under the effect of the whiskey and gin: "the midget growled in the vestibule, furious, waving her twisted little limbs at the level of the second lieutenant's knees" (480). Ironically, Jorge's relationship with the midget is the only stable heterosexual relationship that exists at the close of the novel—Abílio having long been abandoned by Odete, Artur Esteves living in depression, "waiting in vain for feathers of wings to grow [...] to be able to fly" (406), and his wife having an affair with the communications officer who will be murdered.

More pertinent, however, to our study than the very end of the novel following the anticlimactic "shock of non-shock" homicide of the communications officer is the bizarre crescendo of sexual misencounters that, under the effects of alcohol, reaches its climax as each of the main protagonists and those who have joined the group all try to outdo each other with their most outrageous sexual experiences.[23] Interestingly, at this point, two of the minor protagonists, the magician's assistant and one of the blond twins, relate their most kinky sexual stories. The magician's assistant tells of her experience with "a nut who would make her put on his mother's wedding dress before getting into bed with her, and dress up himself with blue velvet knickers, his hair in bangs, wearing a ruffled shirt, repeating Mama Mama Mama Mama Mama Mama Mama in the little whine of a child. [...] Trying to kiss her 'peepee place' and force a lemon lollipop between her legs" (373). The blond twin relates how an engineer paid her to "screw with him and with a clothes dummy called Alfredo

[...]. Making love to a managing director and a pasteboard dummy is a hell of a job, the skinny girl explained, I was beside myself trying to get an orgasm out of Alfredo, two or three mechanical little shakes and that's that, two or three little nothing leaps and all set" (395, 402). The twin explains how Alfredo's wife had died of a stroke and the dummy had filled that affective void.

As both of these examples illustrate, the conclusion of the novel, playing along the line of obscure sexualities and engendered masquerade, takes to its peak the explosion of normal heterosexual boundaries. What is inherent in the conclusion of the novel is the instability of gender and sexed polarities, which become a prime site for the "parodic proliferation and subversive play of gendered meanings" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 44). Lobo Antunes's challenge to the compulsory heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within that domain pervasively illustrates "gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual, and gay and lesbian contexts," yet his novel takes these discontinuities to the extreme (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 173).

What is ultimately left is a feeling of overall dissatisfaction that extends from the public/political sphere to the private realm of sexuality. This parallelism between sex and revolution permeates the novel, as expressed in a passage by Jorge who, after sex with Ilda, confesses "how quick this all is [...], how horribly unsatisfying and quick this all is" (198). The kaleidoscope of overlapping, unfulfilled desires that fuel the narrative represent the constructed status of gendered performances and un-idealized relationships that are purposely and emblematically set against what was seemingly a meaningless war and a subsequent, manqué Revolution.

Notes

[1] "Gender as performance" is a concept that has achieved prominence in psychoanalysis and gender studies since the 1990s and that has been mostly associated with Judith Butler, who is by no means the first to offer this type of theorization but gives the most detailed (and often overly complex) account. In particular, the distinction made by Butler between performance (as a "bounded act") and performativity ("a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'"), as outlined in the essay "Critically Queer" (*Bodies That Matter*, 234) appears difficult to uphold since both rely upon recitation of the same norms and conventions and the performance is itself performative.

[2] Butler's arguments for an iterative model of the subject takes as its primary theoretical tool Derrida's notion of citationality that argues that performative utterances are not singular events but the effects of "citational doubling" as explained in Derrida's "Signature Event Context."

[3] Here Butler is specifically discussing Monique Wittig's 1981 essay "One is not born a woman."

[4] Though the narrative consists of the recollections of these four companions and their captain, there are other comrades present who seem to be sitting slightly removed from the group mentioned and to whom there is the occasional reference and who also interject their comments.

[5] Among the four novels written by Lobo Antunes before *Fado alexandrino*, the silent female interlocutor in *Os cus de Judas* (1979; translated as *South of Nowhere*, 1983) is the most obvious example of this effacement of the female protagonists.

[6] As Hilary Owen states, "the notorious Addendum to Article 5 (of the 1933 constitution) asserted that women not be afforded equal citizenship on account of 'as diferenças resultantes da sua natureza e do bem da família'" (4). For an overview of the status of women under Salazar, see Ana Paula Ferreira's "Home Bound: The Construct of Femininity in the Estado Novo." For a more general overview of women's issues in Portugal, see Kathryn Bishop-Sanchez's "Women's issues in Portugal."

[7] In the section of this article entitled "On the Critical Dyad 'Literature and Revolution,'" Ferreira discusses some of the key intersections between the Portuguese Revolution and "the female question," in particular reviewing the legal changes and the position of the woman writer during this period.

[8] There are several scenes in the novel where Jorge is positioned outside a half-opened door through which he can see his wife with her lover.

[9] This section is developed interruptedly over several pages (starting at page 485) and ends with the following passage: "Inês, dripping oil, was now slowly caressing her friend's triangle of hair with her nose and chin, moaning as she nibbled at her groin, her navel, her hip bones [...]" (496).

[10] The *International Encyclopedia of Sexuality* states that in Portugal homosexuality "was considered by the law as a behavior against nature and was considered equivalent to the crime of vagrancy. Individuals accused of this crime were kept, sometimes for years, in the *Mitras*, institutions for prostitutes, homeless, and other excluded persons." Only following the revolutionary period did the first gay, lesbian and bisexual groups appear claiming their rights and recognition (Nodin 520). For an overview of the social status of gays, lesbians and bisexuals since the Revolution, see also Fernando Arenas and Susan Canty Quinlan's *Lusosex*, especially pages xviii-xix.

[11] Coincidentally, in Esther Newton's *Mother Camp*, a drag queen "Désirée" (Nick Cristina) is depicted several times (45, 47, 59).

[12] This aspect of transsexuality is briefly discussed in Butler's *Gender Trouble* (90).

[13] This is mentioned specifically in relation to Inês, her "toadlike spasm" (38) and moving slightly "on the mattress like a turtle at the bottom of a fishbowl" (38).

[14] As we will develop, there are butch connotations associated to the "purple haired lady" throughout the text, as the reference to cigarettes in this passage.

[15] Maria Alzira Seixo refers to the desired women in the novel becoming undesirable, and mentions Inês as one of the examples. However, it would seem that Jorge, still obsessively thinking about his wife, continues to desire her through the memory of the shared past (Seixo 139).

[16] The original Portuguese is as follows: "Meto no cu a minha tusa, Odete, mas tu que fazes do peludo intervalo de coxas em que me não perco, em que me não afundo?" (386). The expression "meto no cu a minha tusa" can be interpreted on several levels. On the one hand, it could refer symbolically (as in the English translation) to the self-sufficiency of the male sex, or read as a declaration of "turgid" indifference.

[17] As Phyllis Peres rightly points out, the amusement park world, "The Pit of Death," "The World of Illusion," is really a trope of the ruins of empire (198).

[18] Seixo comments on the different styles of narration as follows: "As únicas personagens

que, para além do capitão, assumem mais longamente o acto de narrar, Esmeralda e o official de transmissões [...] fazem-no com uma dimensão poética que também desvia o texto do seu estatuto regular, oferecendo-nos, especialmente no penúltimo capítulo, momentos de uma rara beleza de escrita e de uma qualidade lírica exemplar"(140).

[19] In Lobo Antunes's next novel, *Auto dos danados* (1985) [*Act of the Damned* (1993)] one of the main protagonists, Ana, will likewise become the narrator in the second section of the text. These two texts mark a stark contrast to the silenced woman in the bar in *Os cus de Judas*.

[20] Irigaray quotes Lacan as stating that "woman comes into play in the sexual relation only as mother"(102).

[21] One of the most symbolic examples of this is the passage in which the fusion of the political fear impersonated by Captain Mendes and the sexual fear of not being able to perform with the concierge become, somewhat disturbingly, part of the same scene (116).

[22] The original expression is "tesão revolucionária" (392).

[23] Phyllis Peres comments on this anticlimactic conclusion of the novel in relation to the impossibility to regenerate the nation whose "articulation has become disarticulation"(199).

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Auto dos danados: cenas de uma família condenada

Maria Lúcia Wiltshire de Oliveira

Resumo: Em *Auto dos danados* (1985), Lobo Antunes encena a decadência de uma família tradicional portuguesa ao mesmo tempo que rompe a tradição romanesca, praticando a tendência da prosa pós-74 para a fragmentação da forma e do conteúdo. Ao conceder a narração às personagens, o autor procede como um psicanalista em relação a seus pacientes, transformando a narrativa na sucessão aleatória das falas dos membros da família, retratados como criaturas humanas, demasiado humanas. Elas provocam horror mas também compaixão, numa clave de concepção e recepção polifônica que lembra Dostoievski. Tema, tons e tintas conferem à obra um lugar de destaque na ficção portuguesa contemporânea.

Em *Auto dos danados* (1985), sexto romance de Antônio Lobo Antunes, a cena se abre na memória de Nuno às vésperas de sua fuga, juntamente com a família, para a Espanha, acossados pela onda de radicalismo revolucionário que se instalou em Portugal dois anos após a Revolução dos Cravos. Já pela referência crítica à utilização de antiquados microfones pela elite militante para "ladrar o socialismo aos camponeses" (Antunes 15), fica clara a pertença social do narrador a uma família burguesa, da qual os tios foram presos sob a acusação de "sabotagem econômica" ao novo regime. A vasculhar, incompetente e desnecessariamente, as casas abandonadas sob o olhar apatetado de

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 121-31.
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uma avó inválida e inofensiva. O quadro figura a situação em Lisboa num ano de alta panfletagem oficial. Da cena política e pública, nosso olhar é dirigido para o cotidiano da vida em família, quando o protagonista deste relato inicial observa a sua própria mulher na cama a fumar a amargura, despeitada de se saber traída. Neste ponto está o interesse de nossa pesquisa, voltada para o estudo da representação da família portuguesa—expressão da vida privada—, na ficção contemporânea, como ícone das alterações ocorridas na vida política, em especial após o 25 de Abril, quando se dá o processo de mutilação e extermínio da figura do patriarca.[1] Paralelamente à eliminação do protetor da pátria, temos a condenação e morte do seu preposto no âmbito privado, o *pater familiae*. Diante do fim de Diogo, patriarca de *Auto dos danados*, os sucessores abandonam o casarão às margens do Guadiana, e tratam de salvar a pele, como fizeram tantos portugueses após 1974.

Família burguesa, compromisso entre o público e o privado

Deixando de lado a longa história da família, dos primórdios da cultura humana à crise moral que antecedeu a Revolução Francesa, passamos a observar a acentuação do vinco entre o domínio do público e o do privado com o propósito de regular as novas relações econômicas, através de novos papéis sociais para os seus atores. Entre estes está a família moderna.

No século XIX a vida privada passou a se confundir, na classe burguesa, com a "cultura" da casa, a interiorização, a gerência sobre a educação, a troca espiritual, a liberdade na escolha dos parceiros, a vida religiosa independente da Igreja, a sacralização da família e da maternidade. Esta autonomia experimentada pela família foi acompanhada da crença no trabalho autônomo e público, exercido pelo chefe da casa, numa época em que o capitalismo endossou a liberdade de produção expressa e desenvolvida como iniciativa privada. "À autonomia dos proprietários no mercado corresponde uma auto-representação dos homens na família," diz Habermas (229), que dela passaram a fazer a idéia de uma instância de liberdade, de eleição voluntária, feita de afetos e voltada para uma educação genuína do homem. Mergulhada numa autoconsciência ingênua, a família ficou presa ao processo de valorização do capital, e nessa condição cumpriu as funções dele, a saber: garantia de transmissão da propriedade, manutenção do casamento como forma afetiva de sustentação do capital e preocupação com a educação como forma de inserir seres no trabalho socialmente necessário. Assim a família burguesa, apesar de buscar a formação da personalidade de uma forma autônoma, na verdade esteve ao

serviço das relações extra-familiares. Sem perceber sua fragilidade, a instituição veio apresentando contradições insolúveis, entre as quais a inconciliável aliança entre amor e casamento, que foi responsável por adultérios e outros dramas na literatura ocidental.

As idéias de liberdade, de amor e de educação fizeram da família um lugar para a construção de uma subjetividade nova, que se expressou em cartas, diários, narrações autobiográficas, enfim, práticas que se tornaram gêneros calcados nas relações íntimas que se dão no seio da família. Daí se explica o enorme êxito dos romances epistolares, do romance burguês e da autobiografia, que fizeram do íntimo e do familiar o seu assunto predileto. As relações entre autor, obra e público se tornaram próximas e todos choravam juntos. O realismo psicológico (romântico ou não) reproduziu no romance relações substitutivas do real, criando-se a *fiction*. A intimidade passou a ser mediatizada pela literatura, na qual se espelhou o público burguês, consumida por leitores privados que a discutiram no espaço público dos cafés, salões e sociedades acadêmicas.

A ruptura deste padrão familiar burguês aconteceu ao longo do século XX, mas de modo diferenciado nos países que compõem a sociedade ocidental. De modo geral observou-se um exacerbamento do individualismo, que, aos poucos, entrou em choque com a família, demolindo-a ou, em alguns casos, erigindo um modelo alternativo para ela (por exemplo, as comunidades *hippies* da década de 70). Em Portugal este processo foi retardado pela manutenção do regime salazarista até o último quartel do século e até onde interessou às elites agrárias, colonialistas e mundiais envolvidas. Gerações inteiras foram embaladas pela imagem de um Portugal doce, cuidado por um chefe extremoso e puro, que se duplicava no seio familiar por meio da imagem do pai exemplar. É esta concepção que será desmitificada pela obra de Lobo Antunes, cujo *Auto dos danados* exibe uma máquina escritural a revelar as vicissitudes de uma família condenada.

Maquinações romanescas

A memória faz a datação da cena nuclear da diegese—a morte do patriarca—ocorrida cinco anos antes do "divórcio" (18) e dez anos após o presente do enunciado em que o agora ex-marido se regozija por estar livre dos sarcasmos conjugais ao amanhecer. Desembocamos no tempo da enunciação—1985—, que coincide com a data da publicação do romance, quando Nuno, liberto da pele de chefe de família, abandona as hierarquias na relação com a velha criada

que "hoje em dia" o trata familiarmente por tu.

E começa a intriga em dois sentidos. Maquinações diegéticas entre as personagens da família vão se revelando diante do leitor. E maquinações escriturais organizam a narração, em cujos fios o autor, repetindo Alexandre Dumas, pretendeu pendurar seus quadros. Na época rememorada, Nuno é um dentista que reside com a família no Restelo, bairro de classe alta de Lisboa, próximo às Embaixadas. Pelas asas da memória, tempos e espaços distintos se cruzam, revendo-se entre o acordar, o café e o sair para o consultório, atravessado por várias imagens: o Tejo e suas gaivotas, a África trazida pelos chifres do bengaleiro, o passado mais remoto da sua infância na Quinta. Espaços e tempos entrecortados têm sido uma constante nos romances de Lobo Antunes, prática aprendida com os africanos, que, segundo ele, não classificam o tempo em categorias pois vivem na elasticidade em que todos os períodos—presente, passado e futuro—se misturam e se entrechocam, numa forma obsessiva de aproximar a escritura do vivido.

"A imaginação é a memória fermentada. Quando se perde a memória, perde-se a faculdade de imaginar," diz o autor que emprega esta prática nas personagens, dotando-as de narrativas próprias em capítulos separados ao longo do romance, livrando-as, mesmo à morte, da afasia ou de qualquer outra patologia da memória. A narração mimetiza o pensamento por meio da linguagem que busca representar as cenas num entrecruzamento temporal e espacial, seja na reprodução das idéias geradas em cada situação, seja na das ações que as suportam. São referências ao momento da enunciação, ao passado remoto ou ao passado recente, numa mistura de actantes e de interlocutores em pacto fechado com o leitor. Deste se exige empenho, mas a ele é oferecido o prazer da descoberta paulatina das relações de parentesco que envolvem os sujeitos das várias narrações. Isto supõe um leitor não-preguiçoso e um protocolo de leitura não superficial (diferente do que acontece com a crônica, gênero praticado e desprezado pelo autor por dever de sobrevivência).

Ainda que evitando o papel de narrador omnisciente intruso, o autor manipula por detrás da cena os cordelinhos de subjetividades que falam por si mesmas, criando uma impressão de distanciamento que lembra a dos cirurgiões a operarem seus pacientes. Mas a aparente frieza causada pela ausência de um narrador que acompanha, protege ou execra personagens gera um efeito mais humanizante do que a figura de um narrador demiúrgico. O escritor Antônio Lobo Antunes, que depois de muitos percalços conseguiu abandonar a medicina para se dedicar com exclusividade à literatura, abstém-se de uma

fala própria como deus *ex-machina* para concedê-la às personagens, tal como faz um psiquiatra ou analista com seus pacientes. Sucedem-se então progressivamente, como numa terapia de família, os relatos dos seus membros, aos quais não cabe a rubrica de heróis, muito menos a de anti-heróis. São todos criaturas humanas, demasiado humanas, que cometem erros, violências, infâmias (a lembrar as invocadas no "Poema em linha reta" de Fernando Pessoa/Álvaro de Campos), que têm o direito de justificar, ou ao menos explicar, os seus atos por razões que serão ou não aceites como legítimas pelos leitores. Assim desdobram-se diante de nós personalidades dostoievskianas, que nos horrorizam mas também nos comovem. É a condição humana trazida em sua nudez, sem retórica, sem véus, sem utopias, num enxugamento ideológico que tem gerado muita controvérsia em torno da posição do autor diante da realidade.

Se, entre as muitas forças da literatura, Barthes destaca a *mathesis*, que consiste em assumir muitos saberes, e a *mimesis*, que é a sua força de representação confundida com a utopia e a História, é pela *semiosis* que se realiza a verdadeira prática do escritor que

> [...] consiste em jogar com os signos em vez de destrui-los, em colocá-los numa maquinaria de linguagem cujos breques e travas de segurança arrebentaram, em suma, em instituir no próprio seio da linguagem servil uma verdadeira heteronímia das coisas. (28-29)

Em *Auto dos danados*, o texto é plural, heteronímico, emergindo como índice do despoder, a negar qualquer sentido fixo por meio da escrita da fragmentação e da digressão. Como quer Barthes, Lobo Antunes procede a uma excursão textual polifônica sob a forma da encenação, dramatúrgica ou psicanalítica, de consciências em tensão, em conflito umas com as outras, ainda que não se trate de uma peça de teatro ou de uma sessão terapêutica. Apesar de confinadas em seus discursos, o romance se constrói como um mosaico de falas que se atualizam na mente do leitor de uma forma intensa e progressiva até chegar ao momento final, quando todos os parentes completam a fuga para a Espanha, à exceção da mulher mais pura e do homem mais ignóbil da família, num convite a uma leitura alegórica de conjugação herética entre o Bem e o Mal.

Em direção à festa

A estrutura do romance é assimétrica, constando de segmentos que se organizam por critérios diferenciados, embora estejam explicitamente referidos a uma festa. No primeiro segmento, nomeado como a "antevéspera da festa," Nuno narra em 1985 o que lhe aconteceu naquele dia em setembro de 1975, ao longo de três capítulos sucessivos: de *Manhã* no consultório, de *Tarde* no apartamento da amante e de *Noite* na casa dos pais e no caminho para Monsaraz, no Alentejo, onde está a morrer o patriarca da família de sua mulher.

O segundo segmento, "véspera da festa," se estrutura como um cassete a ficcionalizar a gravação do depoimento de duas mulheres, mãe e filha. Na parte intitulada *Lado A*, está a fala de Lurdes, mãe de Ana e sogra de Nuno, iniciando suas reminiscências com a referência à chegada da filha ao casarão à beira do Guadiana; do *Lado B*, registra-se a narração de Ana num tempo futuro, já divorciada de Nuno, já morto o velho, seu avô. O estratagema do *cassette* alude, em feição moderna, à persistência do cerceamento da fala feminina, que, ao longo da história do país, foi confinada a formas fechadas, como diários e cartas, secretos e impublicáveis. Em vez de divulgar a fita, Ana grava a sua própria voz do outro lado da fita num outro momento em que retorna a Monsaraz para salvar a mãe de uma suposta usurpação de bens tramada pelo seu tio, Rodrigo, o famigerado devorador de mulheres, a quem a mãe, a despeito de tudo, continua a amar.

No terceiro segmento, "primeiro dia de festa," emerge a memória de Francisco, irmão de Ana, como sujeito narrador de dois relatos destinados à sua amante, "Lídia, onde quer que se encontre." São três capítulos em seqüência e só no último percebemos que o protagonista está internado numa clínica para recuperação de drogados, muitos anos após o fatídico dia da fuga para a Espanha.

No quarto segmento, encabeçado pela rubrica "segundo dia de festa," surge finalmente a fala do patriarca, que faz um retrospecto de sua vida às vésperas da morte, revendo-se como patrão, pai e marido. Diogo é o protótipo do patriarca à portuguesa, latifundiário que faz alianças de todo tipo com o Estado e a Igreja para manter seu poder, provedor da família de quem todos dependem e a quem todos odeiam, temido e respeitado pelos campônios. Autoritário, grosseiro, violento e licencioso, o senhor engenheiro observa com realismo e desamor as maquinações que são feitas à beira do seu leito de morte, ao mesmo tempo que recorda com amargura o abandono da mulher a quem tratara sob chicote, à moda antiga.

No quinto e último segmento, nomeado "terceiro dia da festa," alinham-se

cinco registros cujos narradores se ligam ao patriarca: 1) a narração de uma neta artista, excluída do convívio familiar por ser fruto ilegítimo da união de sua filha mongolóide com o genro devasso, Rodrigo; 2) o depoimento do notário que registra o testamento do velho; 3) as falas entrecruzadas de Leonor e Gonçalo, filhos do patriarca, entremeadas com a sua própria, numa intensificação da polifonia discursiva; 4) o testemunho do médico, Alfredo, que lhe assiste nos momentos derradeiros, entrecortado com as cenas da festa na aldeia; e 5) encerrando as narrações autodiegéticas, a fala de Rodrigo, seu genro, que brada contra os *slogans* da Revolução.

Aos poucos, chegamos exatamente ao último dia de festa quando um touro é sadicamente sacrificado num clima de histeria e vinho. A narrativa, pela voz do Doutor Alfredo, faz o contraponto entre a morte do patriarca e a morte do boi que

> [...] de súbito sozinho no centro da praça do castelo, com toda a gente, abrigada na muralha, a contemplá-lo a medo, o touro tão sozinho como o velho de boca aberta, sem bochechas, na sua cama enorme [...]. (265)

Continuando, enfoca-se o animal que, bêbado de fúria e dor, rodopiou e assustou seus pegadores

> [...] do mesmo modo que as pupilas do velho ao demoraram-se no filho, no genro, nas netas, ou no marido dentista da neta [...] faziam recuar a platéia amedrontada, como se pudesse ainda dominá-los [...]. (266)

Por sua vez, o genro degenerado relata as providências da fuga ao mesmo tempo que expressa o ódio ao sogro recém-falecido, sacrificando-lhe, também por sadismo, alguns cães de caça sob o olhar submisso e estarrecido do feitor, que partilhava com o patrão o amor à raça canina. Ao tempo de sua carnificina, ele vocifera contra os comunistas que, a essa altura, segundo ele, estariam no seu encalço.

Longe de qualquer idealismo, Lobo Antunes não poupa o povo, também ator da violência, que, pela voz de um seu representante, afirma quanto ao espetáculo da arena: "Se não houvesse sangue era uma porra, tínhamos a praça deserta. Quem não fica contente com as desgraças dos outros?" (259). Em resumo, todos os capítulos e sub-capítulos se encaminham para este desfecho de violência que é o sacrifício do boi, em que o sangue parece tomar o lugar

de algum valor desaparecido.

A desorganização temporal que preside a memória dos inúmeros narradores é contrabalançada pela linearidade na titulação dos capítulos em que a festa, acontecimento culminante, conjuga num mesmo signo a morte do animal e do patriarca, parceladamente antevista nas partes chamadas *antevéspera, véspera, primeiro, segundo e terceiro dia da festa*. Há pois, um desfile de tipos —e lembramos de Gil Vicente—cuja representação grotesca nos aproxima das atividades carnavalescas quando se institui um mundo de atos e sentimentos às avessas.

Uma família condenada

Resumindo o universo desta família, temos o que se segue. Um patriarca, Diogo, e sua esposa que abandona o lar após 15 anos de maus tratos, deixando-o com os três filhos. O primogênito, Gonçalo, não se enquadra no modelo de morgado, vítima de um distúrbio mental que o leva a incorporar, desde a infância, a personalidade de um inspetor de estradas de ferro. Casa-se com Lurdes, filha do feitor, à revelia da moça, com quem tem dois filhos, Ana (esposa de Nuno) e Francisco (viciado em drogas e amante de Lídia, uma atriz velha e de segunda categoria). O segundo gênito é mulher, Leonor, "que não falava nunca," frase que o irmão repete quatro vezes (244-45, 251, 254, 257), a despeito de sua esquizofrenia. É casada com Rodrigo, o *donjuan* escroque da família. O terceiro filho é a portadora de síndrome de Down, destituída de nome e vítima sexual do cunhado com quem gera uma filha espúria e bastarda, rejeitada pela família, cujo nome também não é citado pelos narradores.

Em mais de um sentido esta família tem uma representação adoecida, seja pela ausência absoluta de afetos positivos entre seus membros, seja pela interdição da palavra aos que estão sob o poder do patriarca, restando aos seus descendentes o silêncio, a doença, a droga, a exclusão social e a deficiência mental. Se o pacto matrimonial foi firmado como um negócio à revelia dos noivos, o seu fim não foi melhor do que isso: para evitar a vergonha social de ter sido abandonado, Diogo encena a farsa da morte da mulher com direito a pêsames e herança usurpada. Mais do que um patriarca mutilado, ele encarna a figura patética de um poder em vias de extinção.

O romance se insere na longa série de narrativas que, desde o neo-realismo, vem fazendo a radiografia impiedosa da família tradicional portuguesa ligada à burguesia rural. Na década de 40, *Gaibéus*, de Alves Redol, introduz oficialmente esta visão depreciada da família, retratando o comportamento violento

e concuspicente dos patrões e dos filhos-de-família, que exploram e humilham os ceifadores de arroz do Ribatejo. Lá vemos o desenho da família do proprietário da terra, que, aliada ao Estado e à Igreja, pratica a dupla moral nas relações com os filhos, as mulheres e os camponeses. Tal tradição romanesca se dissemina nas décadas seguintes, invade os anos 60 e ultrapassa a queda do regime em 74. Em 1968, o romance *O Delfim*, de José Cardoso Pires, introduz uma extraordinária alteração na estrutura narrativa e, ao lado de *Bolor*, de Augusto Abelaira, fazem da classe média o objeto principal de sua dissecção, à diferença do neo-realismo, que predominantemente centrava sua atenção nos desfavorecidos, vítimas da grande burguesia rural. Depois da Revolução, uma série de romances enfocam a família rural portuguesa, com destaque para a trilogia de Almeida Faria onde se dá, tal como no *Auto dos danados*, a morte do patriarca, num contraponto ideológico com a morte de João Mau-Tempo, o heróico campônio de *Levantado do chão*, de José Saramago.

Em suma, o protagonista principal de *Auto dos danados* é a família, tal como acontece na obra de Almeida Faria. É Nuno quem define claramente o caráter decadente desse clã a que pertenceu pelo seu casamento com Ana, neta do patriarca:

> [...] família nojenta de cabras e bois mansos a devoraram-se mutuamente no casarão de Guadiana, a sonegarem-se as heranças, a odiarem-se, a roubarem-se, a esmagarem-se, a destruírem-se, e tudo isto debaixo da boquilha e da pálpebra cáustica do avô. (86)

Em conclusão

O modelo narrativo usado por Lobo Antunes permite ao leitor, através dos depoimentos parciais dos integrantes da família, compor sua própria opinião sobre as personagens e o texto, segundo uma ética não-maniqueísta, favorecida pela ausência de um narrador hegemônico a conduzir o relato. Se a princípio isto pode desorientar, logo depois, apanhado o tom, a leitura garante um prazer renovado pela revelação parcial e paulatina do todo. Ao final do romance temos uma visão multifacetada da realidade familiar, compreendendo seus vícios e virtudes como se com eles tivéssemos convivido. E a generosidade do romance, apesar da ardida indiferença com que se comunicam entre si as personagens, reside justamente na visão proporcionada pelo autor ao leitor, fazendo-nos contemplar as misérias e as bonanças da condição humana de uma forma bem mais realista do que se propuseram os realismos do passado

e do presente.

Estamos diante de um romance polifônico, tal como foi definido por Bakhtin, ao estudar a obra de Dostoievski, como um sistema de planos que se cruzam. O autor, como criador do todo romanesco, não é encontrável em nenhum dos planos: situa-se nesse centro regulador representado pelo cruzamento das superfícies, e todas as superfícies se encontram a uma distância diferente desse centro do autor. Na cena da festa, mescla do sacrifício do boi e do patriarca, há uma dimensão carnavalesca própria ao romance polifônico. Na enumeração de falas independentes, revemos alguma coisa do diálogo socrático em que a verdade sobre algo era obtida pela *síncrise*, num processo que confrontava os diversos pontos de vista sobre um tema proposto. Por outro lado, a *anacrese* era o meio usado para provocar o discurso do interlocutor, obrigando-o a externar sua opinião. É o que faz Lobo Antunes ao recuperar memórias, depoimentos, cartas, gravações, falas de todas as visões, gerando uma concepção extremamente dialógica. O próprio autor nos conduz indiretamente a estas conclusões ao confessar que "desde que lera Dostoievsky, ficou com idéia na psiquiatria, mas, na verdade, com o estilo do romancista russo em seu sangue [...]" (Medina 430).

Apesar de psiquiatra clínico—e talvez por isso mesmo—Antônio Lobo Antunes não tem uma visão estreita e mesquinha que o leve a classificar os homens como normais ou patológicos, heróis ou anti-heróis. Se, por um lado, ele condena o menosprezo contra os deficientes mentais, por outro, não lança ao inferno aqueles que os nomeiam depreciativamente como "mongolóides." Ao contrário, livres de qualquer pecha moralizante e redutora, todos são mostrados como seres marcados por idiossincrasias, fraquezas e preconceitos—como todos nós—num grande afresco da condição humana e, por isso, capazes de se tornarem grandes personagens.

Nota

[1] O conceito de "patriarca mutilado" está em Roudinesco.

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The Geographers' Manual: The Place of *Place* in António Lobo Antunes

Richard Zenith

Abstract: The abundance of place names in the novels of Lobo Antunes is not, as in some authors, a device used to "ground" their fictions, to make them more real, more down-to-earth. Place is largely what his novels are all about. The author has an especial love for his hometown, Lisbon, whose neighborhoods are often treated as major characters, with the people who inhabit them being occasionally reduced to caricatures, props, scenery. The prominence given to place makes these novels valuable sociological documents and challenges us, à la Copernicus, to realign our thinking. *The Natural Order of Things* and *The Inquisitors' Manual* serve as sample texts for my inquiry.

A manual of geography is what I would *like* to have written, or to see someone else write, but it would take up a book, not an article. Some of António Lobo Antunes's most interesting characters are places, and one could—through his books—travel through the better part of Portugal and a good portion of Angola. In a hundred years from now I can imagine someone doing with Antunes's novels what Franco Moretti has done with those of Jane Austen, Dickens, Balzac, Flaubert and other nineteenth-century writers. In his *Atlante del romanzo europeo 1800-1900,* Moretti literally maps out the England of Jane Austen and the Paris of Balzac. The places in which Austen's fictional plots unfold reveal to us the parameters of her own, real-life world, which

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 133-41.
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was limited to southern England and—within London—to the residential West End. Within those general boundaries, the specific places in which the characters circulate tell us something about their social background and present position in society. And the opposite is true. The novels of Austen and her contemporaries are valuable documents for learning about places: about their then rather different topography (how streets and neighborhoods were configured) and the social dynamic that prevailed.

The place of *place*, in the work of Lobo Antunes, is so large and multiplex as to become, at times, a bit dizzying. In *The Natural Order of Things*, the characters are constantly on the move—in the present or in their remembered pasts—across the length and breadth of Portugal, from Tavira, on the southern Algarvian coast near Andalusia, all the way up to Monção, on the northern border with Galicia. The novel's crisscrossing narratives (with ten different characters telling their interrelated stories) also crisscross the country, taking us to various points along the western coast—including Esposende in the north, Peniche and Ericeira in the center, the region around Lisbon, and the beaches near Odemira in the Lower Alentejo—and in the interior, where various characters live, for shorter or longer periods, in the far-northern town of Chaves; in Santo Tirso, near Oporto; in Guarda, a town in the Beira Alta not far from Spain; in Mortágua, north of Coimbra; and in the southern Alentejo town of Beja. Not only that, certain characters are also wont to revisit their African pasts—in Mozambique, Johannesburg and Algeria. In *The Inquisitors' Manual*, the remembered and imagined past extends to Spain as well as to North Africa and Angola, but most of the action occurs within a 100-mile radius that includes Lisbon, Setúbal and Palmela, Estoril and Cascais, Alcácer do Sal, and Alverca.

The geography of Lobo Antunes's novels could, on the macro level, be studied as a kind of national photograph that reflects, among other things, the profound changes in Portuguese demographics—with massive numbers of *retornados* and immigrants having flooded into its urban centers since the 1974 Revolution, while rural towns and regions are, more often than not, the nostalgically remembered birthplaces of people now definitively settled in greater Lisbon, where one fifth of the country's population is concentrated.[1]

This author's novels may also be used, and in fact have already been used, to focus on Portugal's long and troubled relationship with Africa—not from a political, but instead from a psychological point of view.[2] Africa was a huge, inscrutable continent that overwhelmed the colonizers. As a mythic space, it is, or was, for the Portuguese a kind of America, a land of dreams and

opportunity. The reality, of course, did not always live up to the dreams, as in the case of Alice, who, in *The Inquisitors' Manual*, recalls with bitterness the twenty-six years she and her alcoholic husband tried without success to make their fortune in the bushland of Angola (214-28). It should be noted that this same Alice, who becomes the foster mother of Paula, the Minister's illegitimate daughter, nurtures no illusions about Portugal, where the misery suffered by people like her and her cousin Alda is no different, she claims, from what they suffered in Africa (220).

Exploited at great cost, feared and coveted, Africa was always an ambiguous obsession of the Portuguese, and no writer has examined its aftereffects as trenchantly as Antunes. In the two novels I've chosen as my sample texts, Africa is not a major motif, but it is a "leit" one, asserting itself at fairly frequent, if irregular, intervals. In *The Natural Order of Things*, Domingos, who spent ten years as a miner in Johannesburg, left behind his crazed wife in a Mozambican mental hospital and returned with his daughter to Lisbon, himself half crazed, which is in a certain way his salvation. For he enthusiastically remembers his years in the mineshafts as a time when he flew, like a bird, in the depths of the earth. "We all fly however we can, that's my theory," he states in one of the chapters he narrates (79-86); further, his way of flying, as an impoverished retiree in Lisbon, is through his memory and upside-down imagination of Africa. That continent, by all the usual standards, broke him as a man, but it is what feeds his salvific life of fantasy. It could be pointed out that doddering Domingos, like Portugal's pre-Revolution political leaders, cannot let go of Africa, but I doubt it is a connection that Antunes wanted to make. His interest is in how Africa entered, and altered, the Portuguese psyche.

The Portuguese fixation on Africa began with the conquest of Ceuta, in Morocco, and the northern part of the continent is evoked often enough by Antunes. In *The Natural Order of Things*, a woman dying of cancer has, we learn in the final chapters, made up most of the story, and the events she remembers from her early childhood in Algiers (255-60) are among the few completely real and happy ones in the book (the other ones being those from Benfica in the old days). In *The Inquisitors' Manual* the Minister, repenting the death of a political prisoner at his hands, imagines that the cheap ring on her finger is from Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria, and he fantasizes about having gone with her on a North African holiday for a few days of silly, thoughtless happiness (398-99). There was, in sharp contrast, nothing happy or romantic about the trip that the Minister *really* made to sub-Saharan Africa. Con-

fronted by the atrocities of the colonial war in Angola, where he was sent by Salazar in 1961, the Minister literally shat in his pants out of fear and horror (429). Africa is or was, for the Portuguese, a dreamland, but also a place of reckoning, a reaping of seeds that were badly or mistakenly sown, as well as an encounter with an incommensurate unknown.

If place on the intercontinental scale offers a rich field of study, a less obvious but perhaps even richer field is furnished by the most local "geography"—that of streets and neighborhoods within a city and its suburbs, and in particular Lisbon, where Lobo Antunes has spent most of his life. Antunes, who knows his city like the back of his hand, winds us through its streets and cross-streets, as well as through its environs, like a taxi driver who also happens to be a sociologist. It's not just that he's a good observer; it's that place and person are inseparable in his novelistic art. He has been accused of being a caricaturist, and there is validity to the charge—validity and virtue, for he employs exaggeration to bring out what is specific in each character and, most especially, what is specifically Portuguese. Minor characters, it is true, may be reduced to one or two hyperbolized traits, and they constitute a gallery of Portuguese types, but major characters are endowed with a psychological depth and emotional complexity that show through their caricatural overlay. Consider, for instance, the Minister in *The Inquisitors' Manual*, who wears sheepskin boots, habitually smokes a cigarillo, and almost never removes his hat. Or his grandly inept son, João, who wears a rope for a belt and spends his days building a boat in the garage of the farm in Palmela. Both characters are outwardly ridiculous but display, at least in their inner monologues, a wide range of emotional reactions (this is somewhat less true for João, a casualty of his parents' neglect). In any case the characters—both major and minor—and the caricatures that are drawn for them, are place-dependent. You can take the Minister and his son out of rural Palmela, but you cannot extirpate Palmela from their thoughts and behavior.

Moving closer to Lisbon we have João's wife Sophia, a pureblood daughter of Estoril's upper crust, and in this case the caricature is all-defining. Sophia is a carbon copy of her well-to-do mother, who is a carbon copy of so many other bracelet-jangling, bridge-playing socialites from the seaside resort town. Sophia and her mother, whose sophistication is just another form of provincialism, are incapable of seeing anything except from their Estoril-determined point of view. By probing and exemplifying that point of view (reflected in their attitudes toward the middle-class, the poor, the Church

and their own children), Lobo Antunes defines not only his characters but Estoril itself. Places, in the author's work, are themselves major characters, which accounts for why some of the people we meet in his fictions are indeed no more than caricatures, scenery, props, details, whose function is merely to help define the "personality" of the places they inhabit.

In the ensemble of the author's output, Lisbon may be considered his main character, as Dublin was for Joyce (yet as Prague was not for Kafka), whose work (excluding his diaries) was after all rather abstract and not especially site-specific. Lobo Antunes maps out different parts of Lisbon from novel to novel, but it is the traditional neighborhoods that garner most of his attention. In *The Inquisitors' Manual*, he tours us around the Praça do Chile, with its statue of Magellan prevailing over the intersection (310, 313), its TB Diagnostic Center on the northwest corner (294, 344), the Largo do Leão (310) a couple of blocks west, the Deeds Office on the Calçada de Arroios (297-98), and the Constantino Garden (305) several blocks south. He occasionally escorts us up the Rua Morais Soares (295, 310), which departs from the Praça, to arrive at the Rua Barão de Sabrosa (303), the Praça Paiva Couceiro (302) and, further on, the cemetery at Alto de São João (295, 297).

At other times we're taken down the Avenida Almirante Reis (298, 310) to Anjos Church (297-298), to the Bairro das Colónias (305), to Desterro (303), to the red light district known as Intendente (Largo do Mitelo, 355), to the Rua da Palma (287-98), and to Martim Moniz (313, 355), described as "an island of discount stores selling wooden knickknacks, toy horses, toy cars, games with missing pieces, dolls" (313). The Praça do Chile itself is a place "in permanent ferment," "inundated by retirees in slippers who [can] barely walk and by blind people who [bump] into them" and by "the TB victims from the Diagnostic Center so skinny they [fly] about like the leaves swept up at dawn by the municipal cleaning crew" (294).

As a current resident at the Praça do Chile and a frequent passerby at Martim Moniz, I can vouch for the truth in spirit, if not the literal accuracy, of the descriptions. They are given to us through the narrative voices of Milá and her mother, proprietors of a squalid notions store at the Praça do Chile, where they live in an even more squalid apartment. The references to their neighborhood are abundant and ultra-specific, because its immediate vicinity defines the effective confines of their universe. A woman who is used to traveling far and wide, or whose livelihood at least takes her to the far side of town or to adjacent towns, or whose cultural and economic horizons are

broader, is not likely to know—much less speak of—her own neighborhood in such detail.

When, because of her physical similarity to his estranged wife, Milá becomes the Minister's girlfriend, he sets her and her mother up in a fancy apartment on the Rua Castilho, near the King Edward VII Park. But instead of treating us to descriptions of her new neighborhood, Milá, amidst all the enchanting luxury bestowed on her by the Minister, can't help but recall, with nostalgia, her former life as a clerk at the notions store and as the girlfriend of Carlos, a pool shark and small-time smuggler who wasn't even a faithful lover (303-07, 311-13, 322-29). The Minister falls into political disgrace and Milá returns, inevitably, to the Praça do Chile, where her mother eventually dies and she keeps on, tending the miserable notions store by herself and realizing, some twenty-five or thirty years later (342), how *she* will soon join the ranks of the neighborhood's old, lonely women who look out of their tiny windows "baring one or two resentful teeth to the indifference of the street" (343). She imagines herself becoming senile, losing her way around Martim Moniz, and reaching the Praça do Chile only in the wee hours, led back there by scent, "like turtledoves returning to their dovecote" (355). Milá is the Praça do Chile; the Praça do Chile is Milá.

Since Portugal joined the European Union, a sizable portion of its population has prospered; another, no less sizable portion continues to scrape by. The neighborhoods between the Praça do Chile and Martim Moniz have undergone transformation, like the rest of Lisbon, but their residents tend to belong to the old, low-wage economy. Lobo Antunes's novels chronicle, in vivid fashion, the social disparities and changing (or unchanging) economic fortunes of these and other Lisbon neighborhoods.

The Natural Order of Things provides us with sketches of various Lisbon neighborhoods, including Alcântara and, within Alcântara, a little-known complex of garden apartments called Quinta do Jacinto (translated as "Hyacinth Park"), Praça da Alegria, Campo Santana (translated as "Santana Park"), Marvila, Chiado, Praça da Figueira, the Intendente district, Santa Apolónia, and Benfica. The sketches are in some cases (Alcântara, Campo Santana, Benfica) detailed enough to evoke distinctive atmospheres even for uninformed readers; in other cases (Marvila, Figueira Square) the sketch is indeed sketchy, and readers familiar with Lisbon will be much more likely to grasp the settings and importance for the story.

This poses dilemmas for a translator, nearly all of whose readers will be of

the uninformed variety. Is it legitimate to help them out, by slightly embellishing or explicating a place name? As a rule I would say no, but it is a rule—like most—that should sometimes be broken, particularly when it is a matter not of characterizing a place but of merely situating it so as to avoid confusion. Near the beginning of the first chapter of *The Natural Order of Things*, for example, I translated "brisas de Monsanto" as "breezes from Monsanto *Park*" (3), since readers might otherwise wrongly imagine that Monsanto is a town next to Lisbon rather than what it is: a large park inside it. At the beginning of the second chapter, the phrase "rés-do-chão alugado em Odivelas" was, for the opposite reason, rendered as "ground-floor apartment *outside Lisbon*, in Odivelas" (13).[3]

The Natural Order of Things is the second novel in the so-called Benfica trilogy, and it is in Benfica, just north of Monsanto Park, that we find ourselves in the novel's opening paragraphs, for it is to the years he spent there as a child that the thoughts of the insomnia-afflicted narrator naturally drift. It is also where Lobo Antunes lived as a child. The narrator in question (the novel, as already noted, has ten different narrators) is a 49-year-old civil servant—coincidentally the author's age one year before this novel was published—and what he first of all remembers is lying among the broken-down tombstones of Benfica's abandoned cemetery. It is a peaceful image—an image of quiet, ancient death. After a vertiginous tour of this and many other neighborhoods in Lisbon, of many other towns in Portugal and of various countries abroad, the author brings us back to where he began, Benfica, this time through the narrative voice of a woman who is dying of cancer. And so it is not only Benfica but also death that opens and closes this novel. The natural order of things is a circle: the eternal, inevitable return to our origins, with Benfica—the Benfica of the old days—continually reasserting itself in the memories of the various characters who live or once lived there.

From Benfica they were made, like the author himself, and to Benfica they return, like Milá to the Praça do Chile. The natural order of things is re-*place*-ment, with once-bucolic Benfica having given way to a neighborhood full of banks, businesses and traffic. The house on the Calçada do Tojal where the woman dying of cancer once lived with her parents no longer exists, and for some years now she has lived in a seventh-floor condo overlooking the new Benfica market (256-59). But the Benfica of old haunts her memory, and it is only when faced with imminent death that she opens her eyes to the new dispensation: "I suddenly realized that I lived alone in this condo above the

market and that by the natural order of things someone (my daughter, a relative, a stranger [...]) would occupy it as soon as I vacated" (260).

To entertain her final days and to distract herself from fear, the woman writes a novel in her head entitled, perhaps ironically, *The Natural Order of Things*—a rather disordered story of the places where she herself lived or which she "invented," as she says (278), because she knew them only peripherally, or vicariously, having freely rearranged the facts about the people and events associated with them. The Latin *invenire* means "to come upon" or "to find," and the woman's novelistic technique of finding and reordering describes that of the real author, whose fictions are born out of facts, with preeminence given to real places, particularly those he knows well. "I didn't invent Benfica, no, not Benfica, I didn't invent Benfica" (278), insists the woman—or Lobo Antunes through her?

Someone will naturally point out that the psychological importance of a geographical place depends on memory, and we don't need Freud to know that childhood memories are our most formative and informing ones. According to this point of view, it isn't Benfica per se that matters for the 49-year-old civil servant, for the woman dying of cancer or for Lobo Antunes himself, but their respective childhoods, which by chance happened to unfold (partly or wholly) in that particular neighborhood of Lisbon. Similarly, it isn't the west African nation rich in oil and diamonds whose capital is Luanda but the Angola where he faced the shocking horrors of war that so strongly impressed itself on the mind and imagination of Lobo Antunes. Yes, we could say that the crucial places of our lives depend on *when* and *what*, on our memory and its content, but we can say just as truly—and this is what António Lobo Antunes *does* say—that memory depends on *where*, on place, without which it would have nothing to remember. Place is at our origin; memory comes later. And wars take *place* in specific locations, for reasons that usually have to do with land, territory, *place*.

Rather than abstracting or spiritualizing human existence, Lobo Antunes has chosen to root it in geography, places, facts, and minutiae. What is more, he continually reminds us that it is places, rather than people (and their struggles, their wars), that endure, evolving slowly or quickly, and sometimes beyond the recognition of those who lately walked there. But even if they change hands, their form of government, and the names by which we call them, those places resist. We die; they keep going. And so the work of Lobo Antunes, outstanding as a literary achievement and important as a sociological record, is also a lesson in humility for our species.

Notes

[1] *Retornados* are people of Portuguese descent who returned to the homeland after the African colonies won their independence from Portugal in 1974-75.

[2] See, for instance, Paulo de Medeiros's "Hauntings: Memory, Narrative, and the Portuguese Colonial Wars"; Arlindo Castanho's "*Os cus de Judas* di António Lobo Antunes: Memoria di una Guerra Assurda"; and Roberto Vecchi's "Experiência e Representação: Dois Paradigmas para um Cânone Literário da Guerra Colonial."

[3] For a discussion of various problems, including that of place names, that I confronted as a translator, see "A desordem natural de Lobo Antunes e como destraduzi-la."*A Escrita e o Mundo em António Lobo Antunes: Actas do Colóquio Internacional da Universidade de Évora*, eds. Eunice Cabral, Carlos J. F. Jorge and Christine Zurbach, Lisbon: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2003, pp. 395-401.

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Politics and the Novel in *South of Nowhere* and *The Inquisitors' Manual*

William Deresiewicz

Coming to António Lobo Antunes as someone attuned to a very different literary tradition, modern English fiction, I am struck by the Portuguese writer's kinship with so much of that tradition, and in particular, with the novelist who is, I believe, notwithstanding the overwhelming prestige of James Joyce, the most representative as well as the most influential of all modern novelists, Joseph Conrad. Among Conrad's incalculable contributions to fiction in the twentieth century and beyond was his recognition that politics in the modern age presents the novelist—indeed, presents the novel itself—with a special, one might say, an existential challenge. For the hallmark of modern politics is its impersonal quality. History, in the modern experience, is a force that has escaped human control. It is thus a characteristically modern attitude to regard politics—which is, of course, nothing other than the history of the present—as a vast and terrible spectacle beyond the reach of human agency, even human comprehension. It is in this sense that we speak of the logic of war, the logic of material interests, the ineluctability of class struggle, and so forth. In a famous letter to Cunninghame Graham, Conrad writes, with terrifying lucidity:

> There is a—let us say,—a machine. It evolved itself [...] out of a chaos of scraps and iron and behold!—it knits. I am horrified at the horrible work and stand appalled [...]. And the most withering thought is that the infamous thing has made itself: made itself without thought, without conscience, without foresight, without eyes, without heart. It is a tragic accident—and it has happened. You can't even smash

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 143-50.
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> it [...]
> It knits us in and it knits us out. It has knitted time, space, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the illusions—and nothing matters. (Jean-Aubry 1 216)

Conrad is referring to the entirety of the cosmos itself, but he might equally have been elaborating his attitude towards history, and in particular, towards modern history. In the decade preceding World War I, that most terribly machine-like of conflicts, Conrad composed three great political novels, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*, and yet the tendency of each is finally to question whether there can any longer be such a thing as a political novel—and if not, whether the novel as such has any future. Each intertwines a large-scale political narrative with a typically novelistic story of individual motives and actions. Yet in each, the political and the personal are finally forced apart—each novel, as is the nature of the novel, following out its story of private experience, but only at the cost of dropping the larger public narrative that has given that story context and point. If history is a machine governed by impersonal forces, Conrad is asking, what can the recounting of personal stories really tell us about the world? If the individual is no longer a factor in political life, what purchase can narratives about individuals—novels, in other words—have on political reality?

Antunes grapples with these same questions, and while his responses are reminiscent of other writers who have followed in Conrad's footsteps, they are also very much his own. I propose to examine these issues in just two of his many novels, one very early, and another more recent. First, the novel published in English as *South of Nowhere*, but to which I will refer to by its infinitely more pungent Portuguese title, *Judas's Asshole*. Coming near the start of his career and constituting a highly autobiographical account of his 27 months in Angola, the novel may be understood as Antunes's attempt to write his way out of an entrapment by history. In a simple but brilliant conceit, the text presents itself as the nightlong monologue of a veteran of the Angolan conflict to a woman he has picked up in a Lisbon bar. For all its gruesome imagery, the most disturbing feature of the narrator-protagonist's performance may be its sheer compulsiveness. Nothing, apparently, will get this man to stop talking—not even the sex he presumably has during the course of the night. His need to retell his experiences—and, as with Marlow in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, we have every reason to believe that this is neither the first nor the last time he has retold them—overwhelms and, from the reader's perspective,

conceals the experience he is actually having in the narrative present. As in so many of Conrad's greatest works, including *Lord Jim*, *Nostromo*, and *Under Western Eyes*, memory plays the dominant role in mental life. But whereas most of Conrad's narrators deliberately summon memory as a way of ordering experience and making sense of their place in history, Antunes's protagonist has become memory's captive and thus history's victim. He cannot keep himself from remembering. In this, he most closely resembles the Marlow of *Heart of Darkness*, whose own monologue of a traumatic journey into the horror of colonial Africa seems equally involuntary and compelled.

Here, though, history pervades and structures the narrator's present life in another way, as well. Because the novel's two temporal levels are so closely interleaved, we read an account of how Angola crippled the narrator psychologically even as we witness first-hand the effects of that crippling on the way he responds—or rather, does not respond—to the woman he is with. The present thus becomes little more than the past's psychic scar. And because the Angolan story is told more or less chronologically, the narrator gradually becomes, in the story he is telling, the person who tells it, the person who is compelled to tell it, and thus the novel narrates—in a particularly chilling version of that modernist genre *par excellence*, the portrait of the artist—the story of its own emergence. The protagonist does not author his history; his history authors him.

We can amplify these observations by considering the novel's title. "Judas's Asshole": it is the final verdict the novel delivers, in its final pages, on Angola (Antunes, *South* 153). And while I am told that the phrase is proverbial for, as one would say in English, "the middle of nowhere," given the stygian imagery so thick in the narrator's descriptions of that nightmare country, and given also Antunes's persistent interest—to judge by the titles of several of his other novels—in things infernal, we would do well to consider the phrase more carefully, and in particular, to regard it as an allusion to Dante. In the *Inferno*, Judas, entombed within Lucifer's middle mouth, suffers in Hell's deepest center. To be stuck inside his asshole is thus to be in the deepest center of that deepest center, immobilized at the innermost point of Dante's vast mechanism of divine retribution, the poet's version of the Conradian machine of history. The title has other ramifications, as well. For one thing, it reminds us that the narrator is the victim of betrayal—chewed up, digested, and excreted by the empire of whose body Angola is the asshole: the dark, dirty, secret place kept strictly out of sight but implicit in the organism's every function. We might

also consider that the asshole is the inverse, the negative complement, of the mouth, and that the narrator's mouth, through which the entire text of the novel issues, has been commandeered, as we said, by history itself, perverted into a kind of asshole, an organ of compulsive excretion. Indeed, since the narrator, in turn, betrays the empire with his truth telling, we can regard the title as naming the novel's own mouthpiece, the orifice that is addressing us.

To return to Dante, one of the salient features of his epic journey is the act of prophecy, which as the reverse of memory can be defined as the attempt to master history by laying claim to it in advance. So too, Antunes's novel features an act of prophecy at its very outset, one that is meant to govern the protagonist's entire Angolan experience, his aunts' smug prediction that "[f]ortunately the army will make a man of him" (9). Of course, the prophecy proves hideously false, as these women themselves acknowledge on the novel's final page (154). But how could it not? Securely ensconced at the privileged end of colonialism's long and winding tract—much like those fateful knitters Marlow encounters in Brussels on his way to the Congo—the aunts are peering into history through the wrong opening; no wonder they end up talking shit. In history as in digestion, things look a lot different at the beginning than at the end. Beginnings and endings: it is more than authorial whimsy that names the novel's chapters for the letters of the alphabet. Just as the protagonist is trapped, so too is the narrative itself as it moves from beginning to end, A to Z, its end implicit in its beginning, its course strictly delimited and determined. This may strike us as strange given that the text seems to narrate a round trip from Portugal to Angola and back to Portugal, only it does not. "In a certain way," to paraphrase the narrator, he has "remain[ed] in Angola" (138), even his lovemaking merely reenacting his erotic encounters with Tia Theresa, the black prostitute whom we can regard as the infernal, African counterpart of those nattering aunts. "You never know," says the novel's final line, "Tia Theresa might come by and pay me a visit" (154). There is, in fact, no round trip, no possibility of return: not in digestion, not in the alphabet, not in history.

Like many twentieth-century writers, Antunes here addresses the problem of making the novel politically relevant, making its personal stories commensurate with history, by presenting a narrative of the interpenetration of the personal by politics, by history. The Conradian machine can at least be known by its effects. But unlike, for example, in Kafka, we can also see here the glimmerings of hope, and precisely because the novel is so autobiographical. For

while history may author our protagonist, Antunes's own act of authorship can be understood as a way of trying to lift himself out of that entrapment, using memory itself, history's instrument of subjugation here, as the means of leveraging his liberation. When one's enslavement is purely mental, to say that one is enslaved is already to become less so. As in the case of many Latin American writers, such as Garcia Márquez, memory becomes politically significant precisely because it provides a private rather than an official record of experience. That which is subjugating in the mind of the protagonist is subversive in the hands of the author.

By the time of *The Inquisitors' Manual*, seventeen years and ten volumes later, Antunes's scope has become immeasurably greater, his depiction of memory's workings immensely richer, his response to the challenge of history incomparably bolder. To begin with, he locates his fiction much closer to the heart of the Portuguese regime. By centering his story on the figure of Senhor Francisco, the Minister, he gives power a human, if repulsive, face. Still, for the novel's first 370 pages, that center remains absent. Instead—and again, the effect is Conradian, a heart of darkness occupied by a dark heart, a story whose meaning is not "inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which br[ings] it out as a glow brings out a haze"—the narrative circles around and around it (Conrad 18). We begin with the viewpoint of the Minister's son, shell-shocked to the point of inanition, in the midst of a divorce that will strip him of the family farm. (His father, like Salazar himself, has long since been felled by a stroke.) From there, the novel spreads out into ever further reaches of the world misshapen by the Minister's lust for power as well as by the power of his lusts: his son's wife; his housekeeper, abandoned in a nursing home; his illegitimate daughter, deposited in a forlorn provincial town under the care of a childless widow; the corporal who once chauffeured him around Lisbon's poorer districts as he trawled the streets for new conquests. Everywhere in this bleak, seedy world the imagery is of decay, confinement, and material and spiritual impoverishment: beggars and cripples, gimcracks and trash, cramped rooms, dirty sunlight, dead-end lives. As in the earlier novel but on a much grander scale, we know of power through the world it has wrecked. And it is a world. While each monologue traps us in the mind of a character who is himself trapped within a narrow round of resentments, the overall effect is the reverse of claustrophobic—rather, the portrait of an entire ruined society. The novel becomes, not an allegory of fascism, but an anatomy of the way it penetrates societies—families, psyches, bodies—and of the scars it leaves.

Again, as in *Judas's Asshole*, the primary stuff of which those scars are made—and of which the novel is made—is memory. Each monologue interweaves a character's consciousness of their present predicament, years after the collapse of the dictatorship, with their memories of what the Minister did to them during his days of power. In other words, while the great man may be reduced to an incontinent husk, his memory still possesses those he once controlled. Antunes orchestrates these temporal shifts with marvelous deftness and power. Paragraph by paragraph and even line by line, the planes of past and present slide over each other or crash together like tectonic plates. Key phrases—those emblematic moments we never forget—repeat over and over, bursting through the surface of consciousness like volcanic eruptions. As in the earlier novel, Antunes's ultimate subject here is the way the past haunts the present: the way it *is* the present, always with us, always controlling us.

But because the novel assembles itself out of the recollections of some dozen and a half widely disparate characters, memory itself is put up for grabs. Key events are told again and again, often from wildly contradictory perspectives, every telling skewed by a different cocktail of bitterness, ignorance, folly, or simple mendacity. Nothing is ever settled: motives that seemed clear mutate into their opposite; villains and victims change places, then change places again; ironies mount, and with them the force of the blows they deliver. The story takes shape like a painting, its pattern gradually emerging as the artist traverses and re-traverses its surface. The novel, in fact, breaks off in mid-sentence, as if its picture were not and never could be complete. Finally, time itself is abolished. The novel has no end because there is no end: the Minister dies and does not die, democracy comes and does not come, the dictatorship falls and remains in power.

Antunes's methods abolish something else, as well: the very distinction between private and political. This is the real purpose of setting his story so close to heart of the regime, where not only power's dynamics but even its psychodynamics become visible. As an anatomist of tyranny's intimacies, Antunes recalls, not Conrad, but William Faulkner. It comes as no surprise to learn that the Portuguese novelist wrote the introduction to a recently published translation of *The Sound and the Fury*. Like Jason Compson and so many other of Faulkner's most memorable figures, the Minister is a figure of arrogance, brutality, and moral squalor, a crude, swaggering patriarch who presides over his estate—his state-in-miniature—like a feudal lord. And as so often in Faulkner, tyranny here is above all sexual tyranny, rule by the penis. Senhor Francisco

must subjugate everyone to his lust: his cook (on the altar in the family chapel), his steward's teenage daughter (in the barn), assorted maids and gypsies, the pharmacist's widow, the sergeant's wife, the switchboard operator. He's not even above ogling his prospective daughter-in-law with the same proprietary leer he directs at his dependents. No wonder his son has turned out to be such a frightened little mama's boy. As the Minister obligingly explains to him while bending the steward's daughter over the manger: "I do everything a woman wants except take my hat off, so that she won't forget who's boss (*Inquisitor's* 6).

But what is most Faulknerian about this novel is its atmosphere. With the Minister and Salazar and their regime growing increasingly senescent, we breathe an air rank with illusion, cowardice, futility, and neglect, one in which time and nature take their revenge on those who thought they could possess both. Time now means not tradition, but tradition's underside, decay. Nature means not vigor, but excess and exhaustion. The farm runs riot with vegetation, is overrun by the cackling of birds. The windmill rusts, the garden angels crumble, the German shepherds sicken and die. Humans descend to the level of beasts; the boss who fornicates in the barn calls the vet to deliver his illegitimate child. Like the fall of the American South, the collapse of the regime comes as only another, but by no means the last, in a long series of capitulations.

And again as in Faulkner, the tyrant's greatest victim is finally himself, if only because he eventually discovers the limits of his tyranny. For the one thing that can't be coerced is love, and the one person the Minister could not control was his own wife, who walked out on him one day and into an adulterous affair. Apparently, women don't always remember who's boss. Scratch a bully, Antunes knows, and you find a coward. The Minister's priapism, we come to suspect, is by way of compensation—his present, too, is hostage to his past. What is more, his very power permits him humiliations from which the less fortunate are spared. While everyone in this novel endlessly chews over the past, only he tries to reenact it. But the shop girl he stalks in his chauffeured car and plucks from behind her mother's counter and installs in a Lisbon high-rise, whom he dresses in his wife's moth-eaten finery and hangs with her jewels and calls by her name, proves no more amenable to his sniveling entreaties than had the original. This, indeed, is memory with a vengeance.

Finally, as the novel's spiraling round of declarations uncovers secret after secret, degradation after degradation, it arrives at the testimony of the great man himself, that dark heart at the center of its grand design. As the Minister lies impotent in his hospital bed, his memories reach deep into the recesses of

the old regime, from prison torture rooms to the burning streets of Angola. It is at the novel's end, then—or end that is no end—that we come to its beginning, for what the Minister discovered about himself in those dark, long-ago places turns out to have impelled his whole career of brutality and evasion. He, too, is history's victim, crippled and trapped by colonialism and its imperatives. Just as the novel comes full circle, then, so do we: back to Angola, empire's asshole, still the secret place of shame, still both end and beginning. Indeed, like the distinction between the private and the political, that between beginning and end has been abolished. Personal nightmares become national tragedies, in turn breeding new and ever more fierce nightmares.

There is one enormous difference, however, between the late novel and the early one. Here the author enters his fiction not as a weakened figure helplessly telling his own story, but as the title's unseen but all-powerful "inquisitors." While the word suggests the state at its most reactionary and diabolical, these inquisitors are the instruments not of political but of authorial power. It is a stunning conceit: the tables have been turned, the regime itself has been put in the interrogation room, with our author as master of the proceedings. Still, while the novel lords it over the Minister's broken, impotent figure, it can't help but acknowledge the new, bourgeois power that, as in Faulkner's New South, has arisen in the land, with all its crassness and cold-blooded ruthlessness. Fiction's relationship to politics remains as vexed as in Conrad's own day.

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Ficções do eu colonial e pós-imperial: memória, identidade e família em *O esplendor de Portugal**

Isabel A. Ferreira Gould

Resumo: A partir da leitura de *O esplendor de Portugal* (1997), este texto examina a experiência multigeracional do colono português em África e o papel da memória dos filhos na revisitação do passado colonial. Focaliza-se um conjunto de elementos na obra em estudo: o percurso disfórico da família e a decadência do núcleo familiar, as figurações do colono e as configurações da identidade filial, a imagem e o lugar da mulher portuguesa em África, o fracasso do projecto colonial e as ruínas do último império, o deslocamento em relação à África e à pátria dos retornados e, por último, a revisitação dos espaços íntimos da memória familiar através da escrita autobiográfica ficcional.

> No smooth history emerges, but rather a series of fragments, which read speculatively, hint at a story that can never be fully recovered.
>
> Peter Hulme (*Colonial Encounters* 12)

O esplendor de Portugal, da autoria de António Lobo Antunes e publicado em 1997, é um romance que dá conta da relação dos portugueses com África, prestando-se nele particular atenção à experiência multigeracional do colono e à memória filial do passado africano.[1] Como Ana Margarida Fonseca aponta, *O esplendor de Portugal* "procura destruir os mitos do português como povo civilizador" ("Processos" 175). "[S]ignos ideológicos do autor onde, através da ironia,

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 151-77.
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se evidencia o carácter anti-épico intencionado para o romance" ("Processos" 172), o título e a epígrafe do livro formam um todo que nos remete significativamente para "A Portuguesa," letra do Hino Nacional da autoria de Henrique Lopes de Mendonça. Referências constantes a esse texto fundador, o título e a epígrafe surgem recontextualizados neste décimo segundo romance do autor com uma intenção explicitamente paródica e desencantada.

Nessa medida, diremos que António Lobo Antunes elege neste livro duas das linhas mestras da ficção portuguesa contemporânea: a revisão da identidade nacional (Almeida 493) e a revisitação do passado português. Assim sendo, e retomando a temática de revisitação africana que enforma muitas das narrativas do pós-25 de Abril, *O esplendor de Portugal* repensa a identidade portuguesa a partir de um múltiplo espaço ficcional que se concentra, todavia, no percurso disfórico de várias gerações de uma família por terras de Angola. Consistindo numa profunda meditação sobre a família portuguesa, a obra examina a decadência gradual de três gerações de colonos que ocorre paralelamente à dissolução do império, revisitando a colonização do século XX (embora não inclua os treze anos de guerra colonial), a descolonização, o regresso à nação portuguesa e a guerra civil em Angola. É precisamente no seio dessa família de colonos, na Baixa do Cassanje, em Angola, que observamos tanto a hipocrisia e a mentira do projecto colonial português, como a destruição do mito de um colonialismo fraterno, investido na ideia de um império multirracial nos trópicos.

O esplendor de Portugal gira não apenas em redor da auto-imagem do colono e da imagem que os portugueses da metrópole dele possuiam, mas também em redor da experiência do "retornado" em Portugal. Assim, ficciona, por um lado, o percurso colonial africano de quatro personagens até 1961 e, por outro, a (des)adaptação do ex-colono ao novo espaço português no período que compreende o final da década de setenta e os anos noventa. O romance centra-se precisamente na partida para Lisboa dos três filhos, em 1977, e na separação da mãe, que permanece e morre em Angola em 1995. Representando as múltiplas e complexas dimensões da identidade do colono português, *O esplendor de Portugal* coloca precisamente em cena a violência, a auto-destruição, o racismo, a incomunicabilidade humana, a afectividade doentia, o envelhecimento, a doença, a loucura e a morte nesta família portuguesa. Forças mediadoras das relações familiares e domésticas, que a narrativa explora incisivamente, a violência, a traição e a auto-destruição atestam sobretudo a natureza brutal, absurda, do sistema instituído pelo colono. A violência—parte intrínseca da estrutura basilar do colonialismo—encontra-

se presente na mundividência e nas acções do colono, principalmente no seu paternalismo, que busca ora encobrir as atrocidades cometidas contra a população africana ora compensar, através da valoração positiva de uma imagem benevolente do colono, o fracasso e a ineficácia do sistema colonial. Temas centrais nesta narrativa, a violência e o fracasso do projecto colonial adquirem uma dimensão ainda mais trágica quando perspectivados a partir da experiência marginal do colono; ou seja, quando este representa ambivalentemente o lugar de *Outro* e se destaca enquanto personagem proscrita.

O esplendor de Portugal apresenta-se como um livro singular—diríamos mesmo invulgar entre as narrativas portuguesas de revisitação africana—na medida em que ficciona a identidade e a experiência colonial/pós-colonial portuguesa a partir da perspectiva proscrita e subjectiva do filho mestiço (Carlos), cujo testemunho dá início ao livro, e dos irmãos desajustados (Rui, epiléptico; Clarisse, prostituta). Constatamos, pois, que a temática não só é inovadora como nos permite examinar um conjunto de questões que se relaciona com as configurações do português-*Outro* e, sobretudo, com a (não) integração do mestiço na casa e na família portuguesas.

Apesar de tratar da saga de uma família de colonos, a obra retrata momentos centrais da história do Portugal moderno e da experiência de vida de muitos portugueses de aquém e além-mar. Neste sentido, *O esplendor de Portugal* enquadra-se num conjunto de obras da ficção portuguesa contemporânea que indaga sobre a ideia de nação e acerca da construção da identidade cultural portuguesa, porque, como refere Ana Margarida Fonseca, "face à experiência de destituição de um território—físico, cultural e afectivo—cuja posse se prolongou durante séculos, a literatura dificilmente deixará de reflectir tão profunda transformação na auto-imagem de uma nação" ("Processos" 167). Em entrevista concedida a Francisco José Viegas, em *Ler: Livros & Leitores*, António Lobo Antunes enfatiza precisamente este aspecto, afirmando que *O esplendor de Portugal* é a metáfora de uma parte da nossa identidade (40). É assim que nele se desmistifica a imagem do *esplendor de Portugal* e se desconstrói a ideia de uma gloriosa África portuguesa através da análise do espaço colonial (senzala, fazenda, casa) e da relação metrópole-colónia; se examina a colónia como lugar de ruína e perda, e o espaço-regresso de Portugal como cenário de dispersão, trauma e incomunicabilidade da família; e se analisam as imagens disfóricas da África enquanto ser "desventrado" e de Portugal como país agonizante, forçado à redefinição da sua identidade após a descolonização. Num outro plano, o livro faz ainda a sondagem do interior humano, ou

seja, da perspectiva do colono, tecendo a crítica a partir do elemento gerador da violência, representando-o, por um lado, como personagem violenta e torturadora e, por outro, como figura marginal, como dissemos anteriormente. Por último, aposta a obra na representação do "retornado" enquanto indivíduo alienado, obsessivamente voltado para o passado, para quem a África é um lugar de origem e regresso, *topos* revisitado através da memória, do devaneio e da alucinação.

Com este belo romance, António Lobo Antunes convida-nos a fazer uma longa viagem às profundezas do colonialismo e ao passado recente português que persiste nos exercícios da memória finissecular; viagem, sem dúvida, anti-épica que reflecte o olhar da potência colonizadora e exige tanto a reavaliação da auto-imagem nacional como a revisão do "esplendor do passado." Visando problematizar a perspectiva do colono, o romance investe nas ficções do eu e nas memórias plurais e fragmentadas dos filhos e da figura materna (Isilda), tecendo uma imagem da ruína da família e do império de acordo com os seus pontos de vista subjectivos. É assim que as suas três partes apresentam respectivamente as ficções intimistas de Carlos/Isilda, Rui/Isilda e Clarisse/Isilda. As vozes que ecoam do Portugal pós-revolucionário (a partir do presente de 1995), no caso dos filhos, e de Angola após a independência, no caso de Isilda, regressam obsessivamente à África colonial através do testemunho da sua memória pessoal. Livro que supura desencanto do princípio ao fim, *O esplendor de Portugal* revisita, pois, em jeito de prosa diarística ficcional, as formas mais diversas do alheamento, da crise identitária e, sobretudo, da despertença. No caso de Carlos, Rui e Clarisse, a separação de África e o regresso a Lisboa—essa Lisboa que, como Cristina Robalo Cordeiro descreve, é "terra onde desaguam as mágoas dos que a ela regressam sem lhe pertencerem, estranhos ao palpitar da cidade onde tudo parece acanhado, tacanho, insípido, incolor" (431)—são a razão principal dos estilhaços na sua identidade de (ex) filhos do império.

Atestando a importância que a África teve na vida e na carreira literária de Lobo Antunes, este romance acrescenta-se a um conjunto de obras do ficcionista que lida com a experiência africana e a guerra colonial portuguesa [respectivamente *Os cus de Judas*, *Fado alexandrino* e *As naus*]. Todavia, e como Maria Alzira Seixo frisa em *Os romances de António Lobo Antunes* (2002), *O esplendor de Portugal* destaca-se dos três títulos acima mencionados na medida em que examina precisamente o ponto de vista dos portugueses que nasceram em Angola e que tiveram que de lá partir. Como Seixo aponta:

> *O esplendor de Portugal* é decerto o mais total e incisivo destes romances, ao perspectivar esta matéria, pelo menos se considerarmos a voz de queixa ou alheamento oriunda de África, isto é, a voz dos que lá nasceram e de lá partiram, ou que ficaram para partirem pela morte, que a sua permanência de vários modos veio a causar. Porque nos três primeiros romances mencionados, os efeitos não são certamente menos pungentes, mas radicam na terra portuguesa, em termos de regresso ou de nostalgia, de desadaptação ou recordação atroz, e África é neles um período de passagem, transformador e destrutivo mas sem o peso de origem a marcá-lo. (319)

Uma leitura atenta não apenas de *O esplendor de Portugal*, mas da totalidade da obra de Lobo Antunes, revela preocupações recorrentes que se reflectem num núcleo temático que percorre muitas das suas narrativas. Entre as figurações temáticas principais destacamos o desencanto com o Portugal pós-revolucionário; a desconstrução das mitologias da pátria e da família; a África, a anti-epopeia que foi a guerra colonial e as ruínas do império; a memória e a re-escrita revisionista do passado; a (des)ordem e a degradação na/da família; o desencontro e o confronto nas relações de género; a ausência de amor; o sofrimento e a morte. De salientar, e muito especialmente no romance em análise, "a visão do passado é trazida como uma necessidade para avaliar-se a insuficiência do presente (inacabado e desconhecido depois de superada a euforia com a Revolução)," como indica o *Dicionário de literatura portuguesa*, organizado por Álvaro Manuel Machado (39). A re-invenção ficcional do passado português é, sem dúvida, um aspecto predominante não apenas na ficção antuniana, mas numa boa parte da produção literária do pós-25 de Abril, revelando uma "tendência de toda uma geração que, através da metaficção historiográfica, tentou desvelar a face de um Portugal velado durante séculos por uma imagem mitificadora imposta pela ideologia oficial" (Machado 39).

Em *O esplendor de Portugal*, e na maioria dos livros do autor, observam-se traços técnicos/estilísticos específicos que incluem a multiplicidade de vozes narrativas e a convergência de pontos de vista; a alternância aparentemente caótica de espaços e tempos narrativos; a intertextualidade; e a irreverência da ironia, da paródia, e do sarcasmo. Em "Os discursos da paródia e do desencanto no nosso romance mais actual—A narrativa," Carlos F. Jorge destaca na ficção antuniana "o dialogismo tomado como absoluto paródico, o cruzar de pontos de vista e de vozes em alternâncias tão vertiginosas que a opacidade discursiva se torna quase uma obsessão de leitura" (94). Em *O esplendor de Portugal* observamos quer o registo dialógico, que se entretece nesta narrativa

sobre o percurso existencial das quatro personagens mencionadas, quer as técnicas destinadas a ressuscitar e decantar o seu passado em África.

A escolha do espaço periférico da colónia e do universo familiar colonial como *lugar de decantação* tem especial importância na obra em análise. Nesse sentido, o romance visa examinar e filtrar a identidade portuguesa a partir das margens das representações, ou seja, do espaço da colónia como lugar de contacto e fronteira. Assim sendo, a experiência colonial—que se define por vários tipos de ambivalência e hibridação entre colonizador e colonizado, num derramar e transvazar de identidades, culminando, segundo Boaventura de Sousa Santos ("Entre Prospero e Caliban"), num excesso de alteridade identificado na figura do colono/colonizador—faz parte inerente da formação da identidade do Portugal contemporâneo. A localização periférica da colónia torna-se, pois, lugar por excelência para se divulgar, narrar, e até mesmo celebrar a experiência portuguesa através de um olhar-*Outro* e, por isso mesmo, contaminado por uma consciência dupla de pertença e deslocamento.

Memória e identidade filial

Romance sobre a memória (Vieira 215; Chagas 171, 175) e a identidade (Fonseca, "Testemunhos" 181; Fonseca, "Processos" 282; Vieira 223), *O esplendor de Portugal* investe num tipo de rememoração que insiste em manter viva a experiência da África. Por força da evocação subjectiva das personagens, revisitam-se os espaços coloniais da memória familiar, que regressam ao presente através de uma escrita que, como Carlos Reis refere, glosa "a estrutura do diário (mas retirando-lhe alguns aspectos da escrita diarística ortodoxa, como a sucessividade cronológica e a fixação nas confissões de uma personagem)" (24). A sucessividade cronológica é, segundo este crítico, eliminada em favor de um tempo presente cristalizado. Âncora temporal dos filhos, a data de 24 de Dezembro de 1995—noite em que Carlos espera em vão por Rui e Clarisse para celebrarem a consoada de Natal como se estivessem em África (quinze anos após o último encontro de família)—difere radicalmente do tempo fragmentado das inscrições maternas, que oscilam entre 24 de Julho de 1978 e 24 de Dezembro de 1995.

As histórias ou confissões entretecidas dos três filhos, que ocupam cinco capítulos cada na distribuição da obra, evidenciam a natureza polifónica do romance, que investe na articulação desequilibrada das memórias filiais e maternas, sendo o único elo de ligação o espaço africano que os membros da família insistentemente memorializam. Como notou Ana Margarida Fonseca,

"[a] escolha das formas enunciativas nesta obra de Lobo Antunes sugere logo à partida a preocupação...em fugir a uma visão *autoritária* da história colonial" ("Testemunhos" 181). É, pois, importante observar "que é sobretudo no plano individual, no confronto das personagens com os seus fantasmas solitários e a sombra das suas crises de identidade, que as vivências são convocadas" ("Testemunhos" 182).

Como Ângela Beatriz Faria sublinha, as vozes autobiográficas que preenchem as páginas deste pseudo-diário não apenas buscam a auto-definição como também assinalam a sua condição de marginalizadas na sociedade (2). Assim, ao pronunciarem-se autobiograficamente em forma de ficção de diário, as personagens inscrevem quer os traumas individuais, quer os traumas da família e da nação. Interlocutor por excelência, "sucedâneo de um interlocutor real, à falta dele ou por incapacidade dum relacionamento normal com outrem" (Rocha 28), o diário, ou a ficção de diário, revela igualmente uma situação de privação. Por isso é escrito sobretudo na doença, na prisão, no exílio e na guerra. Visando guardar, preservar e salvar memórias e estados de consciência, como um *Thesaurus* (Rocha 31), a escrita do diário, enfatiza Clara Crabbé Rocha, resulta quase sempre da ausência de comunicação (28, 31).

Em *O esplendor de Portugal*, a ficção de diário evidencia a situação de exílio do "retornado," especialmente de Carlos e Clarisse; denuncia a ausência (e recusa) de comunicação entre os irmãos e a mãe; e alude à necessidade de afirmação e/ou restauração da identidade de Rui, cuja doença (epilepsia) lhe altera tanto as sensações e o comportamento como a consciência. A inscrição da experiência pessoal pode ser lida no caso de Rui como forma de compensação pelas perdas de consciência provocadas pela doença e pela marginalidade que esta suscita. Em Clarisse, o registo subjectivo expressa a sua condição de clausura no espaço do apartamento e na vida de prostituta da classe alta lisboeta, sendo o devaneio a expressão da sua necessidade de evasão. No caso da mãe, a ficção de diário, inscrita de um modo bastante fragmentado e disperso, sugere o caos da guerra, a deambulação e a viagem pela Angola independente. A inscrição da memória materna consiste, sobretudo, numa forma de sobrevivência à destruição imposta pela guerra, funcionando quer como meio de manter viva a recordação dos filhos, do casamento, dos pais e do passado colonial, quer como tentativa (inviável) de reparar a desintegração da família através dum reencontro (im)possível. É assim que o sonho de poder vir a reencontrar os filhos adquire particular relevo no último capítulo do romance,

quando Isilda imagina no final da vida o Natal de 1995, passado na companhia de todos na Baixa do Cassanje.

Se a inexistência de um centro de gravidade é uma marca comum da escrita diarística que aposta na fragmentação, a que os capítulos deste romance sobre a experiência materna claramente aludem, no caso dos filhos existe um centro em redor do qual gravitam todas as memórias. Este centro—a noite de 24 de Dezembro de 1995—simboliza, no entanto, o vazio porque testemunha a inviabilidade dos rituais de família, o silêncio e a ausência de comunicação. Fazendo parte dos géneros da data, como Abel Barros Baptista indica em "O espelho perguntador," o diário mantém com o calendário uma relação íntima, uma vez que este é princípio constitutivo de toda a escrita diarística (64). Neste sentido, sublinha Baptista, os diários pertencem a um tempo, inscrevendo uma dada personalidade numa data presente:

> [...] [o]s diários seriam [...] modalidades da escrita em que aquele que escreve escreve *em seu nome* para *fazer regressar o seu nome* à designação de uma personalidade: dotada de opiniões, moldada por experiências, animada de preocupações, que o tornam capaz de seguir os problemas da sua actualidade e da sua proximidade, ou seja, capaz de se mostrar *presente* numa data singular que o enraíze num presente activo. (65; itálicos do autor)

Qual a significância do registo autobiográfico/ficcional do "eu" filial em redor de uma só data; ou seja, no dia em que a mãe morre em Angola, que o Natal com os irmãos não se ritualiza e que a separação de Carlos e Lena tem lugar? Penso, por um lado, que a inscrição filial, enquanto testemunho plural e dissonante, procura resgatar do presente de 24 de Dezembro de 1995 um espaço de pertença que "enraíze num presente activo" a existência marginal de Clarisse, Rui e Carlos em Portugal, depois de todos os laços que se encontram na base da identidade primeira do indivíduo terem sido cortados (i.e., morte da mãe, morte anterior do pai, corte com os irmãos e separação conjugal). E, por outro, que o registo diarístico dos filhos visa restaurar catarticamente tanto o seu nome como a singularidade da sua experiência humana, quer em África, quer em Portugal.

Há uma dimensão igualmente importante na escrita diarística que se coaduna com um, senão o principal, tema na ficção de António Lobo Antunes: a morte. Como Marcello Duarte Mathias evidencia, "a morte está aqui sempre presente e sempre eternamente adiada. Escrever é esconjurá-la. Exorcizar

o tempo é adiar a morte, até porque não há *progressão* possível na escrita diarística, já que todos os momentos, do primeiro ao último, se equivalem" (47; itálico do autor). Em *O esplendor de Portugal* procura-se, sobretudo, esconjurar a morte da memória colonial em fim de século. Se a inscrição ficcional do "eu" de Carlos, Rui, Clarisse (e de Isilda até certo ponto) assinala a morte da família e dos laços familiares e, num outro plano, reencena a finitude do colonialismo e do império colonial, ela não deixa, no entanto, de procurar estabelecer uma linha contínua, feita, todavia, de fragmentos e estilhaços, entre presente-passado-presente, atestando as rupturas e continuidades próprias da narrativa autobiográfica e memorialista. As rupturas que os filhos visam superar com a restauração deste fio que possa ligar os tempos indiciam, todavia, outras rupturas na linha de transmissão da herança e da identidade filial. Digamos, pois, que esse fio ténue da memória ritualizada no presente e na solidão de 1995 procura, por um lado, repôr/restaurar o corte no legado familiar/colonial e, por outro, firmar o nome e a identidade filial no presente.

Do império em ruínas à pátria dos retornados: figurações do colono, do *outro* e da família

O esplendor de Portugal investe muito especialmente na representação problemática e complexa do colono e dos seus pontos de vista. Assumindo características específicas no romance, a figuração do colono como português-*Outro*—esse grupo pejorativamente designado por "brancos de segunda" ou por "pretos dos brancos" (Viegas 39)—detecta-se ao nível da sua auto-imagem e da imagem que lhe é atribuída pelos portugueses da metrópole. Apesar de oferecer uma representação literária dos africanos, sobretudo daqueles que convivem intimamente com a família portuguesa—entre eles, o livro destaca Damião, Fernando, Josélia e Maria da Boa Morte—*O esplendor de Portugal*, tal com outros romances do autor, "não se abre ao ponto de vista do colonizado" (Seixo 511), ficcionando-o apenas marginalmente. A imagem do africano é, no entanto, captada do ponto de vista colonialista através do olhar de Isilda:

> [...] o garoto bailundo a fitar o cabo a fitar o meu pai a fitar-me a mim que roubou um saco de feijão como nos roubou Angola, nunca imaginei que Angola fosse um saco de feijão nas mãos de um miúdo e contudo era um simples saco de feijão [...] não podia entender se lhe pertencia a ele ou a nós,

> como este país esta terra [...] o garoto bailundo de carapinha descolorida e barriga dilatada de fome, um saco de feijão roubado sob o braço. (*EP* 212-13)

Contaminada tanto pelo paternalismo como pelo racismo, a perspectiva de Isilda busca claramente reivindicar os direitos portugueses sobre a terra angolana, reduzindo a resistência africana à acção individual de uma criança, do garoto bailundo. Ao representar o colonizado como entidade anónima, Isilda nega, em simultâneo, a subjectividade e a humanidade do africano (Haddour 139-40). No romance em análise, a representação silenciada do africano reflecte, portanto, as estratégias tácitas de apropriação, domesticação, legitimação e marginalização postas em prática pelo colono.

Como Maria Alzira Seixo nota, *O esplendor de Portugal* é um romance que capta dramaticamente bem a atitude de má-consciência e abrogação do colono (511). Revelando-se na "ambivalência de agressividade retornada contra si" e no percurso de (auto)anulação do colono (511), essa atitude é particularmente visível em Isilda. Isilda é, pois, colocada no espaço colonial como figura em decadência, que ora investe em manter vivo um sistema brutal, cuja violência atinge o colonizado, ora é vítima do aniquilamento desse mesmo sistema. O romance explora, desse modo, a imagem do colono como figura ambivalente e fracassada. A figuração disfórica de Isilda reflecte, assim, as contradições do sistema colonial, investido, por um lado, na violência e, por outro, acometido pela sua própria tirania e loucura. A morte, para Isilda, afigura-se como a única possibilidade de libertação desse sistema e como resposta à pergunta paterna que ecoa no livro e que ela internaliza no final da vida: "o que tínhamos vindo procurar em África[?]" (*EP* 393-94). A errância de Isilda pela nação angolana independente em tempo de guerra civil (juntamente com a criada Maria da Boa Morte)—quando a sua existência se reduz a um fragmento, "fragmento de mulher num fragmento de cubata entre fragmentos de ruínas" (*EP* 236)—é uma viagem em direcção à morte que, como Ana Margarida Fonseca aponta, "devolve-a ao tempo infantil da indiferenciação colonizador/colonizado" ("Processos" 171). Nesse tempo de viagem real e alucinatória, quando se vê destituída da casa e dos bens, Isilda assume problemática e simbolicamente em si a postura do *Outro*:

> [...] que eu acocorada na esteira como os jingas, na imobilidade dos jingas, quietos durante horas ou dias ou semanas sem repararem em nada sem se ralarem com nada por não existir tempo nem duração nem idade, existir a morte não como

> acabam as pessoas mas como acabam os rios, as vilas, a memória, cadáveres sem importância estendidos nas pranchas engordando o arroz, eu a cheirar como os jingas, a comer grilos e larvas como os jingas, se trabalhasse para a minha mãe era capaz de beber álcool das feridas, loção de barbear, perfume [...]. (*EP* 184)

Mas, como Fonseca frisa, "se é certo que a sua identificação com o povo angolano não resulta de uma opção verdadeiramente voluntária, importa não subvalorizar o facto de que esta atitude acaba por representar de algum modo a preservação da sua própria identidade através da incorporação do Outro em si" ("Processos" 171). Argumento, no entanto, que "[a] incorporação do Outro em si" é menos um sinal de preservação do que um sintoma da degradação de Isilda, que se reconhece *Outra* no espelho (*EP* 51-52) e no contexto da realidade africana em tempo de guerra. A pretensa "africanização" de Isilda é, sem dúvida, vista como uma condição que ela nega sarcasticamente. Atentemos na representação da sua auto-imagem, que contrasta o presente de Angola com o passado colonial:

> [...] eu na Baixa do Cassanje, no terraço com os meus pais vestida de branco, de laço branco nas tranças, com dez, doze, treze anos se tanto, enquanto me pegavam ao colo a protegerem-me da criatura despenteada, descalça, emagrecida, a mastigar tabaco embrulhada num pano do Congo em pedaços que não imaginava, não supunha quem pudesse ser mas não era eu, que estupidez, como podia ser eu que não passo fome, tomo banho, graças a Deus. (*EP* 188-89)

Em tudo diferente do tempo dos pais e da infância aparentemente feliz de Isilda, "na época em que a fazenda e a casa e os espelhos e eu éramos novos, sem milho pisado nem telhas quebradas nem sardas da idade nem manchas do ácido do estanho a corroer o vidro" (*EP* 86), o lar português no período pós-colonial angolano é a "casa trocada por uma página de bloco quadriculado com manchas de gordura e carvão, soldados no quarto da minha mãe, nos quartos dos meus filhos" (*EP* 87), o lugar aonde não se pode regressar. Por isso, Isilda afirma/pergunta com a única veemência que lhe resta: "como voltar a casa se não há casa" (*EP* 281). A imagem da casa inexistente em Angola permite-nos adivinhar outros sentidos de (des)pertença que se estendem ao centro do espaço português. Nesse sentido, a pergunta de Isilda sugere igualmente que, para ela, não haverá nunca um regresso à casa-nação. O absurdo da experiência colonial culmina, deste modo, na separação e desintegração

da família, com a permanência e morte de Isilda em Angola, e com os filhos na pátria dos "retornados." Angola transforma-se para Isilda em espaço de morte e sepultura; no caso de Carlos, Rui e Clarisse, Portugal simboliza o corte com a herança familiar, com a autoridade investida na figura materna e com os laços filiais. Símbolo da ruína do império colonial e da fragmentação da família, a morte da matriarca no final do romance afigura-se-nos como única forma de libertação da condenação imposta à África, ao *Outro* africano e a si mesma:

> [...] as tropas, mesmo o dos botins de verniz, não iam roubar-me nem levar-me com eles nem fazer-me mal, não havia um só quarto às escuras na casa de Malanje, erguiam as metralhadoras, fixavam-me com a mira, desapareciam atrás das armas, o modo como os músculos endureceram, o modo como as bocas se cerraram e eu a trotar na areia na direcção dos meus pais, de chapéu de palha a escorregar para a nuca, feliz, sem precisar de perguntar-lhes se gostavam de mim. (*EP* 395)

Quanto à figuração do colono, Maria Alzira Seixo destaca o lugar "privilegiado" de Isilda, declarando que "a posição da figura feminina emerge [...] de uma forma que interessa à teoria pós-colonial e de alguma forma a remodela, na medida em que a afirmação do fraco e do subalterno rege neste caso uma desconstrução da convenção tradicionalmente binária em termos de domínio e poder" (519).

Sem dúvida, Isilda subverte o binarismo apontado ao construir e afirmar a sua identidade colonial através do casamento proibido com Amadeu (agrónomo da Cotonang, alcoólico e figura marginalizada em casa e na companhia onde trabalha) e, sobretudo, através da imposição, enquanto mãe adoptiva de Carlos (filho de Amadeu e de uma mulher africana), do seu poder de colona que se estende, deste modo, da casa à senzala africana. Ao comparar Carlos à mãe natural, Isilda anula a autoridade de Amadeu, condenando-o ao aniquilamento silenciado, e impõe entre os africanos o silêncio sobre a identidade híbrida do filho que todos conhecem, mas que são obrigados a calar. O estatuto de mãe adoptiva de um filho híbrido concede-lhe, por um lado, a legitimação do poder sobre o colono e o africano, mas suscita, por outro, o ódio e o rancor dos pais, especialmente da mãe (Eunice), que a troca no leito de morte pela criada Josélia. É neste contexto que Maria Alzira Seixo declara,

> [...] ela, a mulher, o ente tradicionalmente fraco, assume a força da terra da qual se

> apossa numa herança de intrusão, e colhe na fragilidade do marido e no apoio dos criados nativos [...] a legitimação adquirida de ser mãe de um mulato, que adopta, mais por empatia com a mulher nativa que o gerou, que por amor ao marido que a traiu e que despreza. (520)

Podemos, pois, afirmar que *O esplendor de Portugal* investe na desconstrução da ideia de império colonial português ser dominado pela autoridade e experiência masculinas. A inversão do modelo que o romance oferece permite-nos, sem dúvida, resgatar uma outra imagem do feminino, que busca inserir a mulher no centro do império e das narrativas sobre o colonialismo. Como interpretar, no entanto, o papel da mulher (sendo ele marginal ou não) ao serviço do império e das práticas coloniais/imperialistas portuguesas? Em *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (1996), Simon Gikandi levanta essa questão e adverte que o estudo do papel da mulher colonial é um projecto em si contraditório, na medida em que investe numa imagem de alteridade do feminino que não se coaduna com as suas práticas imperialistas:

> Reading the feminine in the culture of colonialism, then, is a project driven by a paradox. We want to read woman as the absolute other in the colonial relation so that we can unpack the universalism of the imperial narrative and its masculine ideologies, but the result (positing white women as figures of colonial alterity, for example) can be achieved only through the repression of their cultural agency and the important role they played in the institutionalization of the dominant discourse of empire and the authority of colonial culture. (122)

Ora, em *O esplendor de Portugal* a representação da figura materna inverte claramente o modelo tradicional de poder e autoridade. Todavia, o papel que Isilda desempenha na construção do projecto colonial português e, sobretudo, na propagação de uma retórica colonialista e racista compromete uma possível leitura da personagem como figura de alteridade. Paradoxo nos estudos do colonialismo, como Gikandi refere, a interpretação do lugar e das funções da mulher portuguesa na edificação do projecto colonial e na difusão de uma mentalidade imperialista permite-nos, no entanto, sondar contradições, ambivalências e tensões que fazem parte inerente da(s) cultura(s) do império. É nessa direcção que ajuizamos as vantagens de se investigarem a presença e a experiência da mulher no império português. Como Gikandi adianta:

> Reading woman in the culture of colonialism and in the service of empire demands, then, that we renounce the binary opposition–between self and other–promoted by the dominant (masculine) narrative and see imperial femininity as an invitation to us to read colonialism's culture in its contradictions and complicities, as a chiasmus in which the polarities that define domination and subordination shift with localities, genders, cultures, and even periods. (124)

Nas figurações da identidade *Outra* do colono, tanto Rui como Clarisse ocupam um lugar privilegiado na arquitectura do romance. Personagem proscrita no livro, Rui corporiza um tema recorrente na ficção antuniana, a doença. Assumida pela mãe como um problema hereditário (*EP* 25, 39), a epilepsia de Rui é um prolongamento do que de terrível existe nela (*EP* 25) e nas memórias antigas que a levam a revisitar o linchamento do louco na vila de Nisa (*EP* 23). Por isso, Isilda afirma entre frases pronunciadas pelo médico:

> [...] há qualquer coisa de terrível em mim que vocês desconhecem mas de que os bichos e os pretos se dão conta, as criadas se dão conta fitando-me a medo logo que entro na cozinha a destinar as refeições como se fosse acabar diante deles, qualquer coisa de terrível que se prolonga no Rui–*Um problema hereditário minha senhora uma complicação que se transmite aos filhos nunca se pode prever como vão agir* [...]. (*EP* 25; itálicos do autor)

"[C]om o caruncho da epilepsia a roer-lhe a cabeça" (*EP* 39), segundo a visão fria e indiferente de Carlos, Rui, na perspectiva materna, "não era como os outros, não falava como os outros, imobilizava-se a meio das refeições de garfo pendurado como se tivesse partido para muito longe, o Carlos e a Clarisse a fitarem-se, o meu marido a encolher os ombros, eu preocupada" (*EP* 34). Metáfora dos traumas e da disjunção familiar, a doença de Rui é símbolo maior de um "mal de família" (*EP* 58), que as crises repetidas e espontâneas, bem como a perda de consciência e a agressividade atestam (*EP* 168-69, 175). Mas a doença não tem apenas efeitos nocivos na auto-imagem de Rui, que desde criança se sente doentiamente atraído pela condição de *diferente* e pelo lugar "privilegiado" que o mal lhe concede na afectividade minguada da família. A condição de Rui acusa igualmente a auto-destruição do pai, consumido pelo alcoolismo, e os traumas de Clarisse, que são, sem dúvida, uma projec-

ção da calamidade que adivinhamos entre as várias gerações desta família. Entre as várias personagens do romance em análise há uma profunda consciência da doença, da debilidade, do envelhecimento e da degeneração familiar.

No contexto pós-imperial português, a doença alude ao deslocamento de Rui. Por isso, o asilo na Damaia representa um lugar de despertença para os que, como ele, estorvam a família. Num contexto mais amplo, a pátria dos retornados corporiza, segundo a personagem, o espaço onde não se encontram pontos de referência familiares (*EP* 41). Representando o que está à margem da razão na nação portuguesa, Rui habita "não bem uma clínica, não bem um lar, um estabelecimento na Damaia onde recebiam criaturas que estorvavam a família como era o caso, moribundos de cancro, atrasados mentais, ceguinhos..." (*EP* 42). Esse asilo português destinado ao ser-estorvo, onde Rui é internado por Carlos, que o priva das suas visitas durante cerca de quinze anos, afigura-se como um espaço onde são negados quer a doença, quer a subjectividade do doente e do "retornado" das terras de África:

> [...] em que me receitam comprimidos que não tomo porque o director os acha caros demais, se me alimentar bem e não pensar em África ano fino, não é doença alguma que desmaiar não é doença, toda a gente desmaia, é cisma, não há problemas que uma namorada em condições não resolva, por que motivo não arranjas uma pequena aqui na Damaia, não uma galdéria, uma dessas que só pensam em melhorar a vida à nossa custa [...]. (*EP* 150)

A aproximação da condição de doente ao estatuto marginal do português oriundo de África é igualmente feita pelos médicos, que difundem uma visão negadora da identidade *Outra* de Rui, recomendando o seu regresso a África, "onde tudo é mais ou menos epiléptico" (*EP* 199). Sintetizando uma imagem pessimista do presente histórico português, tanto Rui, na doença e no asilo-instituição à margem da pátria, como Carlos, na condição de "retornado" na Ajuda, para quem Angola é o único espaço de regresso, reflectem a atrofia, o debilitamento e a apatia dos desajustados. Se a doença alude ao malogro familiar e ao mal-estar no tecido social português, ela não impede, no entanto, que Rui viva num estado de felicidade inconsciente e perversa. "Única personagem feliz da narrativa, embora se trate de uma felicidade desfocada, comunicada entre a maldade e a inconsciência," como Maria Alzira Seixo frisa (339), Rui é, entre as personagens fracassadas de *O esplendor de Portugal*, o único a reconhecer que não há ninguém, nem mesmo Carlos, que seja capaz de impedi-lo

de ser feliz (*EP* 201). Sugere o romance que é na desrazão, no desatino e na loucura, enquanto formas de cegueira à realidade, que Rui encontra a libertação da imagem do *esplendor de Portugal*.

A cegueira simbólica de Rui permite, deste modo, que ele seja aparentemente feliz, porque como Shoshana Felman sublinha, em *Writing and Madness*, "what characterizes madness is thus not simply blindness, but a blindness *blind to itself*, to the point of necessarily entailing an *illusion of reason*" (36; itálicos da autora). Indagando como e por que a literatura reclama o discurso do louco, do doente e do pária (2), Felman argumenta nesse livro que a literatura "gives refuge and expression to what is socially or medically repressed, objectified, unauthorized, denied, and silenced" (4). Por isso, nota Felman, "literature becomes the only recourse for the self-expression and the self-representation of the mad. It alone restores to madness its robbed subjectivity" (4). No romance em análise, as confissões da personagem dão expressão à doença e restauram a subjectividade do doente (enquanto *Outro* da nação portuguesa) através da inscrição da sua voz e memória.

No tratamento de Clarisse, *O esplendor de Portugal* revela a mesma originalidade e virtude criadora que verificamos em outros romances de António Lobo Antunes. Nas representações ficcionais do rosto feminino da experiência colonial e pós-imperial portuguesa, Clarisse ocupa, sem dúvida, um lugar de relevo, aparecendo representada como mulher leviana/prostituta, o que lhe confere um estatuto marginal tanto na sociedade colonial como no Portugal pós-revolucionário. Em Angola, Clarisse representa a rebeldia e a insubordinação na (e contra a) família. Em Lisboa, a prostituição significa um modo de subsistência, indicando o fracasso existencial da personagem. Corporizando o *Outro*, o ex-colono regressado à pátria, Clarisse vê-se e imagina-se no espelho da nação portuguesa como mulher africana/africanizada. Assim sendo, a personagem reproduz o estereótipo de mulher africana/leviana que ela própria vê em si como correspondente à amante de senzala (*EP* 344).

Personagem complexa e instigante, Clarisse não deixa, contudo, de perpetuar a atitude de abrogação do colono. Se essa atitude na mãe indicia a violência voltada contra si, na filha, a abrogação revela-se na indiferença à vida (*EP* 217, 225), na auto-destruição mansa e na rejeição da afectividade. Por isso, ela vê o matrimónio como uma continuação da hipocrisia e do fracasso familiar patenteado na avó, na mãe e em Carlos, afirmando "o casamento é um homem que a gente se vira de costas a afastar o cabelo, nos sobe o fecho éclair, aperta o colchete e se afasta a pensar noutra coisa" (*EP* 374). Leviana e excêntrica em Angola, e dependente de um funcionário do governo português

em Portugal, Clarisse assemelha-se às matriarcas da família (mãe e avó)—na medida em que perpetua o racismo (*EP* 192-193, 270-271, 279) que corrói a vida familiar (sendo Carlos o alvo óbvio)—e à figura paterna, pois herda a sua inconformidade e lugar marginal na família. Representando a excentricidade, a impudência e a negação do *status quo* familiar no espaço colonial, ela desde cedo encena a separação e o afastamento gradual da família sob a protecção "incestuosa" do pai. Sem ter pena de abandonar Angola, os excessos coloniais e o machismo tacanho do colono português, Clarisse simboliza a consciência aguda da despertença e do deslocamento, que reconhecemos no seu constante desejo de partida e fuga. Como ela própria declara na terceira parte da obra:

> Não senti pena de me ir embora de Angola onde mal se deixava a cidade tudo era excessivo e demasiado distante, horas e horas de uma fazenda a outra, senhoras que tomavam tisanas, alarmadas assim que me viam como se me apetecessem
> tolice
> os maridos que propunham em voz baixa sábados numa residencial no Dondo observando a água que se movia às arrecuas como sucede aos rios ao suspeitarem da foz [...] sábados no Dondo com os maridos a entalarem à pressa a fralda da camisa [...] dedos que hesitavam nas notas da carteira tentando um compromisso entre o muito e o pouco
> — Compra uma coisa bonita para te lembrares de mim
> como se me lembrasse deles, que peneiras, não me lembrava deles, lembrava-me da água às arrecuas negando-se à foz, maridos que na Europa seriam lojistas ou serventes e em África cavalos, criados, mobília inglesa, automóveis alemães, jantares com o governador, férias em Durban [...]. (*EP* 273)

A identidade de Clarisse afirma-se, pois, através da negação do estatuto de filha burguesa bem comportada e da rejeição dos espaços familiares do colono em África. A ambivalência perante a realidade colonial que adivinhamos na perspectiva desencantada de Clarisse reflecte as ideias do avô (Eduardo), que Isilda nos transmite no final da segunda parte do livro. É através da perspectiva de Eduardo que melhor se entende no romance a ilusão da razão colonial, bem como o desencanto perante a (sua) condição de colono. Eduardo é, assim, simultaneamente porta-voz de uma crítica incisiva à política metropolitana de exclusão do português das colónias e consciência viva do poder absurdo e ilusório do colono. Assemelhando-se a uma contra-narrativa da epopeia portuguesa, as palavras paternas que Isilda rememora na sua ficção de diário

falam-nos, sobretudo, da condenação ao degredo imposta pelo colono e pela metrópole, da despertença a África, do desprezo com que o colono é tratado pelos portugueses da metrópole e pelos africanos e da posição ambivalente da metrópole em relação às suas colónias (*EP* 255-63).

As palavras de Eduardo, "acabámos por gostar de ser os pretos dos outros e possuir pretos que sejam os pretos de nós" (*EP* 256), demonstram uma descrença profunda nas motivações, nas acções e, sobretudo, no *esplendor do Portugal* colonizador. Aceitando a auto-destruição como pena para os que, como ele, acabaram por gostar de África, "na paixão do doente pela doença que o esquarteja ou do mendigo pelo asilo que o humilha" (*EP* 256), Eduardo diz a Isilda: "não consintas em partir, não saias de Angola, faz sair os teus filhos, mas não saias de Angola, sê bailunda dos americanos e dos russos, bailunda dos bailundos mas não saias de Angola" (*EP* 257). A forma como Eduardo se vê na condição marginal de colono simultaneamente desprezado pela metrópole e pela África encontra ramificações na neta. Assim sendo, Clarisse não se identifica nem com o estatuto de quem procura a ilusão do dinheiro e do poder de querer mandar, na tentativa vã de dissimular a sua condição de português-*Outro*, nem com a identidade de "retornada."

Apesar de Clarisse afirmar "não senti pena de me ir embora de Angola por não gostar da fazenda nem da casa" (*EP* 275), a marca do passado colonial persegui-la-á na vida, anulando-lhe a possibilidade de ser feliz no presente. Clarisse afigura-se-nos, no entanto, como o olhar filial que se imagina mais distante de África. Por isso, cabe-lhe significativamente no livro a missão de narrar a viagem disfórica com destino ao Portugal pós-imperial. É, pois, através da sua perspectiva marginal e proscrita de testemunha dum império em ruínas que visualizamos o drama da partida e o afastamento de Angola:

> [...] catorze dias ao léu na coberta do navio sem toilettes nem espaço para nos deitarmos, sopas e feijões ao meio-dia e à noite, um balde para as necessidades vertido borda for a alegrando os golfinhos, as hélices remexendo-nos a comida no estomâgo, inclusive na piscina, inclusive nos salva-vidas viajavam pessoas, sacos, baús, malas, um piano despedaçado, periquitos, Luanda a apequenar-se aos sacões até os coqueiros da ilha se evaporarem, já não sobrava nada de África, só limos e criaturas chorosas [...]. (*EP* 274)

Se é através de Clarisse que assistimos ao aceno de adeus a África, a ela compete-lhe igualmente narrar a visão primeira da chegada a Lisboa (Seixo

342). Da mesma forma, é Clarisse quem regista a imagem que os portugueses possuem dos africanos e dos "retornados," bem como o tratamento que estes, vistos como "quase brancos," recebem na pátria:

> [...] mais albatrozes, gaivotas, as senhoras da classe de luxo batiam palmas enquanto Lisboa crescia para nós, não já o mar, o Tejo, fumo de chaminés, armazéns numa chuvinha parda, um comboio a escapar-se ao longo da muralha [...], entregaram--nos uma senha para reclamarmos a bagagem cinco meses depois, transportaram--nos para os arredores da cidade sem mercenários nem musseques que ardiam a fim de nos vacinarem, tirarem sangue e medirem a tensão, apavorados com a ideia de trazermos doenças de pretos que se pegassem, lepra, raiva, febre aftosa, bócio *não é que os africanos não sejam iguais a nós claro que são iguais a nós mas coitados nem português falam vi documentários óptimos o mais objectivos que há sobre África com eles meio nus a comerem aranhas vocês graças a Deus são quase brancos são diferentes tomam duche com esses baldes giríssimos de furinhos adorava experimentar tomar duche no meio das bananeiras e assim ter um chimpanzé ou um leão* [...]. (*EP* 277; itálicos do autor)

Lisboa, por sua vez, representa um espaço-*Outro* onde Clarisse pode "respirar de alívio" (*EP* 299) e finalmente libertar-se do jugo materno, da hipocrisia familiar e da guerra. Contudo, Lisboa é também o lugar onde ela não estaria se não fosse África e o alcoolismo paterno (*EP* 319-21, 327). É em Lisboa, enquanto único destino viável, que Clarisse vive a desintegração social, a alienação e a depressão, que culminam nos pequenos actos de suicídio contemplado (*EP* 349-350), em que deseja esquecer a dor presente que vai aos poucos desaparecendo sob o efeito dos medicamentos e dando lugar às memórias de África, da infância e do pai:

> [...] quantos anos tenho agora que o comprimido principia a fazer efeito e sinto que adormeço, quer dizer ainda consigo pensar e falar mas da cintura para baixo deixei de ser eu, desapareci, não me vejo, ainda consigo mudar de canal, desporto, desenhos animados, o Papa, noticiários italianos holandeses belgas espanhóis marr perdão
> marroquinos [...], ainda consigo reparar nas luzes do Estoril desfocadas pela chuva, nos barcos a escorrerem das vidraças, no algodão, no girassol, no milho, em metades de caras queimadas e esmagadas na morgue do hospital, deixei de ser do pescoço para baixo, desapareci, não me vejo mas ainda consigo reparar no

> meu pai pegando-me ao colo a alcançar os ramos das árvores, ficar mais alta que vocês [...]. (*EP* 328)

Sobejamente claros no romance são, pois, os sentimentos de despertença, o desamor à família, a afectividade nula, e o desencanto profundo com a realidade portuguesa que a sua relação com Luís Filipe acentua:

> [...] não sei se gosto da minha família. Não sei se gosto de quem quer que seja. Não sei se gosto de mim, o magazine dos programas de televisão traz o horóscopo desta semana na penúltima página, depois do resumo das novelas, saúde cuidado com o fígado, amor possibilidade de um reencontro inesperado..., não fala em tomar a embalagem inteira de comprimidos de dormir, não diz que me falta qualquer coisa indefinida [...]. (*EP* 343)

É a ausência desse algo indefinido na vida, bem como a crise de identidade no espaço português, que levam Clarisse a desejar um *Outro*-espaço de partida e viagem (*EP* 371). Lisboa devolve-lhe, sobretudo, a consciência da dependência, a asfixia e a decepção metaforizadas na relação bissemanal com o amante. Se na colónia ela tinha encenado a separação e a insubordinação na família, no Portugal pós-imperial Clarisse conforma-se com a condição de mulher subordinada (*EP* 344) que não se reconhece no nome: "Alguém disse o meu nome, talvez o Luís Filipe, talvez a minha mãe a chamar-me ou então fui eu que adormeci sem dar conta, a minha boca gritou—Clarissee acordei com medo do meu nome no sofá da sala, diante da manhã do Estoril" (*EP* 369).

Se a questão da identidade é particularmente problemática para Clarisse, com Carlos esta questão acentua-se devido à sua identidade híbrida. De facto, entre as narrativas de revisitação africana publicadas na década de 90, *O esplendor de Portugal* é a que mais incisivamente aborda a temática da miscigenação, concedendo voz e subjectividade narrativa à figura do mestiço, personagem dividida e deslocada de si própria e dos outros:

> Carlos chamavam um Carlos que era eu em elas não era eu nem era eu em eu, era um outro da mesma forma que se lhes respondia não era eu quem respondia era o eu deles que falava, o eu em eu calava-se em mim e eu permanecia um estranho, um eu que era dois, o deles e o meu, e o meu por ser meu não era, então dizia como eles diziam Carlos. (*EP* 121)

Carlos, personagem suporte desta narrativa, começando o primeiro capítulo com a sua voz, representa um atentado à pretensa homogeneidade da identidade colonial portuguesa. A sua presença na família denuncia, assim, ambivalências e contradições associadas ao projecto de construção de uma sociedade colonial luso-tropical em Angola. Exemplo claro dessas ambivalências é a adopção (assimilação e inclusão) e exclusão simultâneas do filho híbrido, prática que Ann Laura Stoler designa por "incorporação e distanciamento": "dilemmas of colonial rule and a fundamental contradiction of imperial domination: the tension between a form of domination simultaneously predicated on both incorporation and distancing" (Stoler 202). Esse gesto ambivalente revela tanto o paternalismo visível nos actos de benevolência do colono para com as populações subjugadas (enquanto vontade de anular a culpa histórica do colonizador), como o desejo colonial de transformar (colonizar, assimilar, objectificar) o *Outro* no seio da família e da casa portuguesa, aqui tida como *miniatura do império* (George 6). Ora, esse desejo, que se exprime enquanto acto de civilização no espaço íntimo do império, é não apenas uma forma de valoração positiva da identidade colonial portuguesa que se define *vis-à-vis* o *Outro*, mas também um modo de negar a diferença desse *Outro*. A in/exclusão de Carlos no seio da família acarreta um compromisso absurdo entre a verdade interdita e silenciada sobre a sua identidade híbrida (sendo qualquer menção proibida entre os criados africanos da casa) e a constante lembrança, sobretudo entre os irmãos e a avó, do seu lugar marginal na família. A personagem Carlos tem, assim, importância primacial no romance, na medida em que acusa a existência de fronteiras interiores nos espaços familiares do império e exibe o esforço colonial em negar, e anular, a identidade híbrida como categoria identitária específica.

Símbolo da degeneração paterna e da ruína familiar (ele é fruto do encontro colonial que Isilda tenta "reparar"), Carlos afigura-se-nos como uma voz dupla que simultaneamente subverte e afirma o colonialismo doméstico no seu contacto íntimo com os africanos (especialmente com Maria da Boa Morte) e no ódio que por eles nutre como forma de manter a sua "integridade" de colono português junto dos irmãos, da mãe e da avó, que repete ao longo do livro a frase "—É uma vergonha para a família tê-lo em casa Isilda só Deus sabe a vergonha que sinto" (*EP* 191). Por isso, nos laços que mantém com a África, Carlos manifesta a ambivalência dos sentimentos de familiaridade/proximidade e de distanciamento/deslocamento, ambivalência pontuada pela sua ligação à figura tutelar da infância que ele rememora em diversas ocasiões, afirmando,

> *Maria da Boa Morte Maria da Boa Morte Maria da Boa Morte*
> devido a quem a fez haver morrido ao pari-la, sempre de cigarro aceso com a brasa a arder no interior da boca, quando eu era pequeno gostava do cheiro de gordura frita dela, do cheiro de cigarro, da água-de-colónia de que a obrigavam a encharcar-se para apagar a catinga, Maria da Boa Morte; (*EP* 20)

e pela sua rejeição de uma identificação com o *Outro*. Assim, Carlos assimila a culpa de ser diferente e o medo de ser o motivo da desintegração da família. Vendo-se como centro da casa e na imagem do relógio que simboliza a finitude do tempo, da família e do império, ele assume na infância a responsabilidade de manter viva a existência de todos:

> E sentia-me responsável por todos visto ser preciso qualquer coisa em mim, no meu peito, movendo-se da esquerda para a direita e da direita para a esquerda sístole diástole, sístole diástole, sístole diástole. (*EP* 66)

> [...] no momento em que o relógio, em que eu, cessássemos de bater
> sístole diástole, sístole diástole
> a casa e a minha família e Angola inteira se sumiam, tinha de permanecer quieto, com qualquer coisa no peito da esquerda para a direita e da direita para a esquerda [...]. (*EP* 66)

Carlos, ao rememorar na idade adulta a ilusão infantil, deixa, no entanto, entrever uma ilusão maior: a do projecto colonial português que a retórica estado-novista se encarregara de difundir através das palavras "éramos eternos":

> [...] o relógio graças a Deus continuava, continuaria sempre, afinal não havia doenças, não havia morte, África, a minha casa, a minha família e eu não só éramos eternos como nada de mal nos aconteceria nunca, o meu pai podia beber uísque sem que o fígado lhe mirrasse...só os contratados é que cheiravam a cadáver e se sepultavam no cemitério do convento em redor do túmulo do colono onde as hienas uivavam, éramos eternos [...]. (*EP* 68)

Com o "vestígio no formato das unhas que nem um médico se lembraria de examinar, uma criança absolutamente branca em que apenas as pretas [...], detectariam sem hesitar a origem e a cor do sangue mas não diriam nada para se protegerem a si mesmas e a ele" (*EP* 91), Carlos, que no olhar da mãe adop-

tiva perpetua o estereótipo do mestiço como figura infeliz, rejeitada pela terra mãe, representaria um insulto à África e à senzala, o *Outro* do africano:

> [...] o insulto de uma criança europeia na senzala transportada às costas por uma africana qualquer, ajudando-a a não ser repudiada pelos da raça dela, não aparecer morta numa azinhaga do bairro ou esventrada como um cabrito num trilho do capim, eu de caneta sobre o cheque fitando as nuvens [...]. (*EP* 91)

São os irmãos, no entanto, quem melhor transmitem a Carlos a consciência da sua condição de ser dividido e excluído. É, sobretudo, Clarisse quem afirma a sua identidade africana, que Carlos evoca do seguinte modo:

> Clarisse, liberta de mim na cozinha, a chamar-me o que nunca me chamavam, o que todos conheciam e evitavam falar [...] apesar da cor da minha pele, dos lábios estreitos, do cabelo liso, de dizer mãe à minha mãe e de ela me dizer filho como aos outros. (*EP* 77)

É através das memórias de Clarisse, na sua revisitação da viagem disfórica que os três irmãos fazem com destino à pátria dos retornados, que detectamos a diferença de Carlos: "escondido ao meio de nós com o medo de o descobrirem entre os brancos, se chamarem uns aos outros, o chamarem, lhe baterem com a coronha" (*EP* 294). Centro do malogro familiar e alvo do racismo agressivo dos irmãos, Carlos não deixa, no entanto, de reproduzir o mesmo ódio e racismo na sua relação com os africanos e no matrimónio falhado com Lena, mussequeira mestiça e pobre, com quem casa "numa espécie de autopunição afectivamente enjeitada" (Seixo 328). Carlos incorpora e perpetua, desse modo, a culpa e o estereótipo do africano como inferior que a família, como sugere Maria Alzira Seixo, inculca nele como forma de abrogação:

> Bastardo e mulato, educado na família em jeito de filho branco e não tendo sido revelado o segredo que todos praticamente partilham, ele representa a parte híbrida por excelência da família, mas utiliza-a muito mais como abrogação (maltratando os outros ou comportando-se em jeito carrancudo) do que como assimilação. (328)

Em conclusão, não se trata, pois, de ver como *O esplendor de Portugal* olha o *Outro* africano, mas de pensar as configurações que o português assume enquanto indivíduo metamorfoseado, "africanizado" e hibridizado nas mar-

gens da nação. Que tipo de indivíduo é este produzido nas margens? Como é que a experiência colonial o forja e transforma, no sentido atribuído por Albert Memmi em *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, segundo o qual "the colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized" (56)? Como é que os filhos da terra (não apenas os nascidos em África de pais portugueses, mas também os filhos que resultam do encontro/confronto entre portugueses e africanos) negoceiam a sua identidade entre África e Portugal? Quais os benefícios e desvantagens de se examinar a experiência colonial a partir da questão da identidade-*Outra* do português? Será que, como Isabel Allegro de Magalhães interrogativamente sugere em "Capelas Imperfeitas," "o ser aparentemente já de si dividido, fragmentado ou até 'heteronimizado' dos portugueses terá sido um impedimento também ao reconhecimento do Outro, como distinto de si, dado esse outro existir já, de certo modo, dentro de cada sujeito?" (345).

Conclusão

Se, como sublinha Maria Norberta Amorim, a historiografia portuguesa não tem singularizado a abordagem dos sentimentos na área dos estudos da família (10), o mesmo não pode ser dito da literatura portuguesa que tem desenhado—intensamente, registe-se—a cartografia da identidade familiar nas suas múltiplas facetas. Articulando a dimensão íntima e a dimensão afectiva da instituição familiar no contexto colonial e pós-imperial português, *O esplendor de Portugal* explora incisivamente, quer noções de família (com base em hierarquias, dependências, rupturas, conflitos e declínios), quer a importância dos laços íntimos e afectivos na construção do sujeito colonial. A família (a conjugalidade, a ilegitimidade, os laços de maternidade e paternidade, as relações entre pais-filhos e entre irmãos, o adultério e o papel da mulher) é a tópica central que este romance revisita com o intuito de abalar a estrutura da emblemática trilogia "Deus, Pátria, Família." *O esplendor de Portugal* afigura-se-nos, pois, como um romance de família na medida em que incide nos conflitos entre membros de diferentes gerações e na decadência do núcleo familiar ao longo das gerações (Ru 36). Sem dúvida, a desintegração da família simboliza o crepúsculo e a morte do sistema colonial. O projecto colonial é, assim, posto em causa através da evocação da instituição familiar decadente e da família que se desintegra com a morte das figuras de autoridade. A família portuguesa em *O esplendor de Portugal* é, sobretudo, o espaço onde se cultiva a intolerância e o ódio, quer ao *Outro* (o africano,

o mestiço, o doente e o desajustado) quer ao Mesmo, enquanto forma de auto-destruição.

O esplendor de Portugal é, deste modo, um romance anti-épico acerca da identidade portuguesa que se debruça sobre o percurso disfórico da família por terras de aquém e além-mar. Publicado nos anos 90, *O esplendor de Portugal* examina sem complacência as figurações da identidade filial negociada no espaço de conflito e tensão da família, a imagem e o lugar da mulher portuguesa no império, a exclusão do filho híbrido (e o fracasso do projecto de construção de um império multirracial) e a temática do deslocamento português em relação à África e ao Portugal pós-imperial. Prestando especial atenção à memória dos filhos e à narração da sua experiência enquanto história plural, fragmentada e reinventada no acto de decantar o eu-*Outro*, o romance demonstra a atenção que as temáticas da memória e da identidade têm recebido na literatura, na história, na antropologia e, sobretudo, nos estudos pós-coloniais das últimas duas décadas. Obra que investe no autobiografismo ficcional como género privilegiado para o registo das ficções do eu colonial e pós-imperial, *O esplendor de Portugal* revisita a África do colono português e os espaços íntimos da memória familiar (a casa além-mar que não se consolidou, marca da despertença portuguesa a África, especialmente dos filhos) mostrando como o projecto de rememorar o "colonial" e a África é um projecto "falhado" porque a memória não é completa, sobretudo a memória crepuscular dos filhos no fim de século, e, por isso, depende da intervenção da ficção.

Notas

* Agradeço a Pedro Pereira pela forma generosa com que leu e comentou este ensaio.

[1] Daqui em diante passarei a usar a sigla *EP* nas citações do texto.

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O esplendor de Portugal ou uma fragilíssima consciência do ser

Paula Gândara

Resumo: Em *O esplendor de Portugal* a relação afectiva das personagens organiza-se através da perda da origem. O texto desenvolve-se a partir dos monólogos interiores das personagens e desse espaço em comunicação com o leitor, tecido sem noções de tempo nem de espaço. Seguimos o estudo basilar de Maria Alzira Seixo (2002) sobre esta obra e ficamos com o seguinte panorama: considerando que o esplendor de Portugal se estabelece a partir de uma correlação directa da degradação africana e a ditadura salazarista, a autora especifica o valor de Angola como o espaço do absurdo vivencial das personagens.

O esplendor de Portugal (1999) de António Lobo Antunes será, em meio à sua já vasta obra, um dos textos que melhor espelham a relação de Portugal com as suas ex-colónias—incluem-se neste grupo *Os cus de Judas* e *Fado alexandrino,* se bem que também *As naus* se possam contextualizar no mesmo índice, embora de um ponto de vista essencialmente parodístico. No entanto, ao contrário do que acontece nas outras obras, onde a relação se centra em Lisboa, em *O esplendor de Portugal* a relação afectiva das personagens radica em Angola, especificamente na Baixa do Cassange, e toda a obra se constrói a partir da perda do lugar da origem. Tal como seria de esperar no contexto geral da escrita de António Lobo Antunes, este livro cresce essencialmente a partir dos monólogos interiores das suas personagens e de uma relação que, desse modo, privilegia o espaço de

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 179-92.
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comunicação com o leitor. Digamos que a obra se tece a partir do fio de consciência das diversas personagens, não respeitando quaisquer noções nem de tempo nem de espaço e sem uma anotação gramatical consequente.

Se seguirmos o texto de Maria Alzira Seixo sobre esta obra, *Os romances de António Lobo Antunes* (2002)—uma tarefa incontornável dada a qualidade do texto em causa e ainda a falta de material crítico sobre o texto de António Lobo Antunes—ficamos com o seguinte panorama: considerando que *O esplendor de Portugal* se estabelece a partir de uma correlação directa com a degradação africana implantada a partir da ditadura salazarista, Maria Alzira Seixo trata de especificar o valor do lugar, Angola, como o espaço de construção fundamental do absurdo vivencial de cada uma das personagens: Carlos, Clarisse e Rui, os irmãos, que são enviados para Lisboa com o rebentar da guerra e cujo quotidiano é apresentado em paralelo com o da mãe, Isilda, que jamais abandona Angola.

O tempo de história vai de 1978 à véspera de Natal de 1995, o presente do discurso, no entanto encontramos incursões da memória de Isilda e da sua própria mãe a um passado mais remoto. Aliás, o espaço de desencontro vai da terra-mãe à própria mãe. É notório que a construção romanesca se funda na divisão entre a mãe e os filhos, uma divisão que tem paralelos metafóricos no afastamento da pátria *vis à vis* as colónias, e que se estende a todo o agregado familiar, para já não referir a divisão entre os próprios portugueses radicados em África face aos portugueses em Portugal e depois a mesma divisão face aos chamados retornados, classificação que incluiria os três irmãos depois da chegada a Lisboa. No final, acabamos por ficar, nas palavras de Maria Alzira Seixo, com a convocação da reciprocidade dos olhares do colono e dos seus compatriotas perante a responsabilidade do processo de (des)colonização. Segue a autora apresentando aquilo que considera como os "traços estilísticos da escrita impressionista" (Seixo 327) de Lobo Antunes para depois retomar o fio de apresentação da narrativa como "uma história de separação e desencontro" (328) e fazer a necessária ligação temática da obra com a sua estrutura gramatical e linguística. Ou seja, a acumulação discursiva, o aparte, a alteração do tipo de letra do redondo para o itálico e vice-versa, marcando algumas das diferenciações temporais no discurso das personagens e a alienação dos sinais gramaticais, apontam para uma noção da obra orgânica em íntima conjunção com a desagregação e morte do mundo que esta linguagem retrata.

Estamos evidentemente perante uma escrita de cariz pós-colonialista em conexão com o espaço teórico feminista. Uma evidência que Maria Alzira

Seixo não deixa de apontar na segunda parte do seu livro, intitulada "Questões de crítica e de interpretação," onde se insere a questão do pós-colonialismo. Esta questão, que perpassa toda a obra de Lobo Antunes de um modo mais ou menos directo, revela-se aqui, segundo Maria Alzira Seixo, na incapacidade de construção da identidade das personagens; nas deslocações espaciais e temporais acidentais; e na inversão das atitudes dos colonizados vs. colonizadores num sentido lato em que cabe a própria reintegração dos ditos retornados—onde Carlos e os irmãos caberiam, como já se disse, mas que também é visível no alargamento dessa estrutura ao comportamento familiar e no complexo permanente do mulatismo em Carlos. Por outro lado, essa inversão de papéis também se pode encontrar no papel predominante da mulher ao longo da obra num contexto onde a ideologia patriarcal é não só clara, como ironizada no decurso da acção. E gostaríamos de deixar claro que se trata aqui da opinião de Maria Alzira Seixo.

Passe-se de seguida a esclarecer em breves traços as características do pós-colonialismo enquanto teoria de análise do texto em questão.

Assim, Linda Hutcheon em *The Politics of Post-Modernism* define pós-modernismo como sendo uma representação eminentemente política onde se justapõem com igual valor os mundos da auto-reflexão e da história. Um movimento que, vindo de uma análise interior para uma exterior, se constrói como ironia, e que no movimento oposto, portanto do exterior para o interior, se liga à "vida real":

> This is the confrontation that I shall be calling postmodernism: where documentary historical actuality meets formalist self-reflexivity and parody. At this conjuncture, a study of representation becomes, not a study of mimetic mirroring or subjective projecting, but an exploration of the way in which narratives and images structure how we see ourselves and how we construct our notions of self, in the present and in the past. (Hutcheon 7)

Este trecho, que Linda Hutcheon vai, de seguida, ligar à noção de metaficção historiográfica, permite-nos a inserção num reino particularmente caro a António Lobo Antunes: o da psicologia. Por outro lado, o pós-modernismo está também em ligação directa com o pós-colonialismo na medida em que se regista no cerne desta mesma dialéctica de interrogação das fronteiras e da representação do Outro, conforme o discurso imperialista ou de busca da nacionalidade. Ou seja, não é possível circunscrever o Real, não é possível

delimitá-lo e a consciência do discurso que caracteriza o pós-modernismo contesta precisamente o poder e a limitação de todos os totalitarismos.

Será então, nesta lógica, que se inscreve o *locus* subjectivo enquanto moção, um processo em si, jamais fixado e jamais autónomo, fora da ordenação da história, mas sempre enraizado tanto na classe social como na orientação sexual, na raça e nas etnias. Trata-se de uma representação que desmascara o processo de construção do *eu* mas que também demonstra o papel do Outro na mediação do sentido do *eu*. Ora, um texto em que as personagens se constroem a partir da memória de cada uma das outras personagens envolvidas e onde só ganham verdadeira consistência psicológica a partir do momento em que o Outro comunica ao leitor as várias vertentes da acção de quem se fala, será assim paradigmático. Não se trata de contar uma história no sentido clássico da narrativa, mas sim de construir personagens a partir dos relatos da sua própria interioridade. Digamos que é como se Carlos, Isilda, e até mesmo Clarisse e o próprio Rui, se deitassem no divã e fizessem do leitor o terapeuta ideal. As técnicas de escrita que Maria Alzira Seixo aponta servem assim não um propósito meramente técnico de formação textual organicista, mas acima de tudo impõem-se como um laço dialogante entre a personagem, que fala e pensa, por vezes em reinos paralelos, e o receptor do texto que pode inserir esse momento num espaço mais vasto. Um espaço capaz de ultrapassar o próprio texto ou que deve mesmo ultrapassar o próprio texto e possibilitar a necessária reflexão, ela sim, balizada por uma perspectiva histórica, social, política e inter ou intra-textual, já que os textos de Lobo Antunes não só se podem ler em blocos de um *continuum* temático como obviamente só fazem sentido quando o leitor estabelece todas as possíveis pontes entre os planos discursivos das várias personagens. Senão veja-se o seguinte trecho em que Carlos nos fala da mulher, Lena:

> [...] engordou, pinta o cabelo, queixa-se de não sei quê no coração, faz exames no médico e toma remédios, a Lena *metendo-se entre mim e a minha família*, a filha de um empregado da Cuca a viver com um cacho de primos a cem metros do bairro Marçal, *nunca disse por vergonha a nenhum colega de liceu que namorava com ela*, se calhava aproximar-se toda risinhos à saída das aulas
> (magra, de tranças, não ia ao médico nem tomava remédios para o coração)
> *cochichava-lhe furioso*
> — Some-te. (Antunes 12; itálico nosso)

O trecho começa por se situar na Ajuda, onde ambos vivem; estabelece Lena como a figura onde se focaliza o olhar e, sem qualquer transição, resvala para o suposto impacto dessa figura na relação familiar do sujeito, para a série de preconceitos que essa mesma figura evoca na sociedade circundante e ainda para a atitude pessoal do sujeito perante tudo isso (cf. itálico nosso). O parêntesis serve apenas para estabelecer uma descrição física que aparentemente justificava a atracção entre Carlos e Lena, no passado, e que obviamente não existe no tempo do discurso, implicando a alteração dos modos de relacionamento entre os dois, ou seja, o parêntesis parece compor o único quadro positivo de Lena, que evidentemente se encontra já desfeito na mente de quem fala. Aquilo que se podia supor como sendo um parágrafo descritivo de Lena termina sendo um retrato do próprio Carlos, que dela parece que fala.

No entanto, as reacções descritas são as dele e em função do mundo dele. Facilmente nos apercebemos que Lena funciona como um espelho da personagem que dela fala e que a vergonha não é de Lena mas do sujeito, que a fúria não é perante Lena, mas perante si. Mais, torna-se claro que a alteração dos parâmetros da relação se processou não por motivos de ordem exterior, tão insensíveis como gorda vs. magra, supostamente doente ou saudável, mas porque o espaço de relacionamento acabou por transbordar desse excesso de um como espelho do Outro ao invés de se processar no desenvolvimento de um *habitat* relacional distinto entre o que é de um e o que é de outro. E logo na página seguinte lemos:

> [...] os meus colegas a telefonarem aos amigos Imagina a grande novidade, sabes a novidade, segura-te bem, não desmaies, adivinha com quem o Carlos, não, o outro, o cretino de Malange namora, *eu detestando a Lena que nem um filho me dá a levantar a mesa na Ajuda*, a limpar o oleado com a esponja, a calçar as luvas de borracha de lavar os pratos
> — *Puseste-os na rua e agora queres os teus irmãos de volta* se fosse a ti não esperava visitas logo à noite Carlos. (13; itálicos nossos)

Repare-se como os tempos se misturam e os sentimentos de cá para lá não fazem diferença em termos verbais: "detestando a Lena" antes e agora. Lena que aponta afinal o verdadeiro responsável pela alteração dos parâmetros da relação familiar: foi Carlos quem pôs os irmãos na rua. É Carlos quem espera que eles voltem anulando quinze anos de ausência. Por outro lado, é ainda de notar como desta relação entre Carlos e Lena não existem

filhos e como, mais uma vez, se responsabiliza o Outro—neste caso Lena. A verdade é que a relação entre ambos mais não faz que repetir o padrão relacional familiar. Ainda antes de Isilda exprimir alguma rejeição a nível formal e exterior—que, aliás, evitará sempre e a todo o custo—é a avó que verbaliza o estigma da vivência dos três netos:

> Os meus netos os meus netos os meus netos, um mestiço comprado em Malange que nem meu neto é, usando os talheres que eu uso, comendo o jantar que eu como, um epiléptico a torcer-se de ataques e uma infeliz que há-de morar meia nua com as outras infelizes [...] a atender soldados. (228)

E no ponto que se segue, em directa relação com este, temos que discordar da opinião de Maria Alzira Seixo.

A crítica, procedendo à análise da obra, afirma o seguinte: "São ambas, Isilda e Clarisse, mulheres iluminadas pelo fulgor de uma infância feliz junto dos pais" (344). Mais à frente declara: "Mãe e filha representam ambas, uma situação de independência, embora de destino malogrado" (344). Se nos basearmos nos mesmos pressupostos da psicologia, de que o Autor se encontra informado em primeiro lugar, temos desde logo acesso a uma informação fulcral que reside no facto de cada um de nós só ser capaz de amar na medida em que foi amado na infância (ou porque foi sujeito a uma terapia posterior capaz de colmatar a ferida narcísica). Para usar as palavras de Nicole Jeammet: "A criança só pode investir-se da maneira como ela própria é investida" (41); caso contrário, as pulsões de destruição virar-se-ão para o exterior, perpetuando o registo de uma realidade negativa, ameaçadora e persecutória, que, em último caso, leva à construção de personalidades psicóticas ou esquizóides.

Digamos que António Lobo Antunes constrói as suas personagens a partir do falhanço absoluto dos bons paradigmas de desenvolvimento infantil e que aquelas, ao longo da obra, e seguindo o seu próprio fio de consciência, operam—em conjunção com uma leitura activa—uma espécie de análise interior por intermédio das capacidades mais ou menos efectivas do leitor. A resposta que a obra pode conter ou não dependerá então, quase que em absoluto, da capacidade do leitor operar analiticamente em modo de espelho. Ou seja, o impacto da obra sobre o leitor corresponderá ao grau de ultrapassagem possível dos traumas das personagens antunianas, traumas esses que se reflectirão *ad aeternum* em cada uma das experiências individuais do leitor e que podem servir, ou não, para uma catarse do mesmo receptor.

Com esta perspectiva em mente repare-se então como Carlos projecta na mulher, Lena, os seus próprios medos, a sua vergonha; veja-se como ele é incapaz de distinguir entre o *eu* e *outro*, o objecto exterior interiorizado, sem nunca se constituir objecto, nem mesmo perante o suposto entendimento que agora se realiza: "e nisto ao cabo de dezoito anos de casado e cego entendi que não queria engravidar de mim para não trazer a vergonha de um mestiço na barriga" (Antunes 95). Lena, ela própria uma espécie de mestiça, pária, portuguesa pobre no meio dos portugueses ricos em Angola e que escolhe Carlos tanto quanto ele a escolhe a ela, espelho um do outro, das suas próprias vergonhas e preconceitos. Não sabemos nunca quem, na verdade, é Lena pois que até às últimas páginas ela apenas se comporta como Carlos a vê comportar-se e a imagem que dela nos chega é a imagem transmitida por Carlos. Na verdade, a confusão é de tal ordem entre o casal que Lena acaba por sair de casa depois de lermos, por várias vezes, o quanto Carlos desejava que ela saísse—como se Lena fosse a corporalização do desejo de Carlos. Quando finalmente Lena activa a separação ficam o vazio e a tristeza de Carlos, e não porque o seu desejo não fosse real mas porque a personagem não tem como entender que a saída de Lena representa a saída dos seus medos e projecções objectificadas no exterior e que a partir desse momento ele se verá obrigado a enfrentar a sua própria imagem, sem reflexo exterior. E muito embora Carlos nunca chegue a verbalizar esta conclusão, sabemos que esta personagem tem consciência de uma divisão interna, de uma parte de si que ele próprio não vê:

> [...] dizia o meu nome
> Carlos
> e eu era diferente daquele nome, não era aquele nome, não podia ser aquele nome, as pessoas ao chamarem
> Carlos
> chamavam um Carlos que era eu em elas não era eu nem era eu em eu, era um outro da mesma forma que se lhes respondia não era eu quem respondia era o eu deles que falava, o eu em eu calava-se em mim e portanto sabiam apenas do Carlos delas [...] lembrei-me que em Luanda ou na fazenda, a ouvir o escuro e o silêncio do escuro povoado do sofrimento dos girassóis eram as únicas ocasiões em que de facto dormia com o eu em eu, em que dormia comigo repetindo
> Carlos Carlos Carlos
> até a palavra esvaziada de nexo não significar nada. (21)

É também a partir desta mesma falha de amor que a infância de Isilda determinará todo o comportamento da mesma e naturalmente dos filhos. Ao contrário do que nos diz Maria Alzira Seixo, não é a repetida imagem de um vestido cor-de-rosa, fitinhas no cabelo e elogios que determinam o grau de felicidade de um momento, se é que podemos organizar o raciocínio nestes termos. Não deixa de ser uma constatação que Isilda recorre a essa imagem em permanência nos momentos de crise, mas o facto é que é precisamente por ser uma imagem e não um sentimento que ela nunca funciona para além do nível das aparências. Atrás de um palco exterior de aparente estabilidade existe uma família em crise. Uma crise causada pelas infidelidades do pai de Isilda e pela repercussão dessa situação no comportamento da mãe e logo da filha:

> [...] a francesa depois de uma discussão do meu pai com o marido que fez que durante meses ninguém nos visitasse nem houvesse sobrancelhas espantando-se comigo
> — Que crescida
> [...] a minha mãe exilou-se no quarto de hóspedes e servia-se de mim para falar com o meu pai. (30)

A divisão familiar e a falta de atenção de que Isilda é alvo, acaba por culminar nessa divisão interior de Isilda que Carlos, Rui, e de alguma maneira Clarisse, também herdarão. Veja-se como Isilda se recusa a entender-se como una desde o início da narrativa:

> [...] e senti o ventre aumentar na escuridão do quarto com aquilo que não é um filho, não é um inchaço, não é um tumor, não é uma doença, é uma espécie de grito no corpo inteiro como o uivo dos cães, agarrei a cabeceira com força até o vento desistir *há qualquer coisa de terrível em mim.* (32)

Isilda reflectirá dois tipos de divisões, que apontam para a existência de dois universos narrativos em crítica aqui—um, individual, e que passa pela apreciação da interioridade de cada uma das personagens, e outro social, que denota a imensa quantidade de sistemas, preconceitos e esquemas comunitários em desagregação. Esquemas estes que vão desde a instituição matrimonial até à do estado e que não se podem distinguir em termos de causa-efeito, ou seja, ao longo da obra não há como saber se é a lacuna interna do ser humano que se perpetua na desagregação sócio-política, se é esta que impele à outra.

Já vimos como a fractura do casamento dos pais de Isilda se reflecte numa estranheza de Isilda perante si própria—perante a gravidez, primeiro, e depois perante o seu próprio envelhecimento ("digo que foi o espelho a envelhecer, não eu" [52]) e concomitantemente perante a perda da situação social de privilégio para uma de miséria e de morte adiada:

> [...] não pode ser Luanda porque não encontro a Samba Pequena, a Samba Grande, a Corimba, o barco do Mussulo, encontro os brancos de Lisboa e os contratados comprados pelos estrangeiros ao comprarem Angola expulsando-me do que me pertence e não puderam comprar, amedrontando-me com cadáveres de feira e ruínas de cartão, eu, a afugentar os cães, para os fantoches vestidos de soldados, armados de metralhadoras de brincar
> — Não me vou embora
> eu para a Maria da Boa Morte a agradecer os aplausos despindo o pano do Congo e as rugas de velha. (357)

Como é evidente, António Lobo Antunes explora na sua escrita um conhecimento do ser humano a partir do interior. Expõe-se ao longo da obra um entendimento do Homem a partir do cerne da psicanálise. Ora, se aceitarmos que esta disciplina propõe uma compreensão do ser humano como criatura fundamentalmente livre e capaz de escolher perante um leque infinito de possibilidades, podemos talvez entender *O esplendor de Portugal* de um ponto de vista mais alargado. Senão vejamos, ao que se propõe um terapeuta é demonstrar ao paciente como ele poderá, ou não, desenvencilhar-se dos imensos esquemas mentais que por força das circunstâncias o constrangeram ao longo da sua existência. Desenvencilhar-se desses esquemas significa consciencializar-se de uma forma de vida subordinada à compulsão, à repetição dos traumas de infância, e de todos os que se foram desenvolvendo como substitutos do primeiro ao longo do tempo. Podemos então dizer que o objectivo último da psicanálise é re-inventar o livre arbítrio. Para que esta concepção da disciplina possa ser mais clara gostaríamos de fazer uma comparação com as leis da física que regem o crescimento do universo onde nos inserimos.

De acordo com Stephen Hawking o universo expandir-se-á horizontalmente e *ad infinitum*, desdobrando-se sobre si mesmo e auto-fragmentando-se. Ficamos assim com um planeta Terra que, parte integrante deste esquema de fragmentação, se constitui em água, pedra, plantas, animais, etc. sem relação entre si e cujo padrão de "evolução," ou melhor dizendo, mudança—falar

de evolução pressupõe um conceito valorativo que neste momento não interessa explorar—se processa no mesmo sentido universal: *ad infinitum* e sem um objectivo pré-formado. Ora, se com as restantes espécies animais os esquemas de adaptação ao meio ambiente são transmitidos geneticamente, no caso da espécie humana a informação é transmitida muito mais rapidamente através da linguagem. Sendo a linguagem uma forma de transmissão de conhecimento essencialmente abstracta quando comparada com a via genética, esse sistema de conhecimento tem não só a virtualidade de criar as possibilidades como de as questionar. O cérebro humano e o seu sistema neuronal criam a linguagem como uma solução e depois a solução metamorfoseia-se numa fonte lacunar a partir do momento que é ela, nela e a partir dela, que se rege o comportamento individual e se conceptualizam as diversas e infinitas relações mentais de cada um de nós.

Aqui começa a ligação à psicanálise já que é a partir deste movimento de auto-entendimento que se estabelecem padrões, não apenas de sobrevivência básica mas de pseudo-sobrevivência psicológica. E dizemos "pseudo" porque eles próprios se criam num contexto cultural determinístico, por sua vez já criado em função dessa mesma pseudo-sobrevivência que talvez devêssemos denominar de utilitariedade ou comodismo. Os padrões criados visam muito mais a manutenção de um espaço civilizacional estável do que o desenvolvimento da liberdade de cada um. O processo vivencial do ser humano será então, de forma simplificada, uma experiência do tipo daquela vivida por Carlos e que já tivemos oportunidade de referir, ou seja, uma série de pressupostos sobre os quais constituímos a nossa própria auto-consciência. Pressupostos estes que, expostos e dissecados no texto de Lobo Antunes, podem ser escalpelizados e entendidos como na verdade são: entraves e bloqueios cujo propósito é simplesmente criar uma falsa, confortável e fragilíssima consciência de Ser.

Quando Carlos se apresenta como um nome e nos alerta para a não-identificação com a coisa-nome, está a expor uma realidade duríssima de enfrentar para cada um de nós: a inquietação de não nos podermos prever dentro de um espaço mental em crescimento permanente em direcção a *x*? Claro que nada disto é novidade e que, em última análise, estamos simplesmente a expor de forma ligeiramente diferente a concepção freudiana de uma neurose colectiva da humanidade. O que será de facto interessante nesta concepção perante o texto de Lobo Antunes é precisamente a capacidade de alargar esta visão do contexto singular ao plural, de uma série de personagens mais ou menos "livres" a uma sociedade igualmente "livre," ou melhor, não-livre. Como nos

diz Isilda:

> [...] arrancámos uma fazenda palmo a palmo a vinte mil hectares de pântanos e mata com catanas, sachos, tractores e antigamente degredados homicidas e gatunos que nos roubavam, arrancámo-la a poder dos nossos ossos e da nossa carne como o mostra o cemitério das traseiras e as sepulturas que o milho engoliu, e expulsaram-nos dela sem outro motivo que não fosse uma palavra cujo significado desconheço, liberdade. (306)

Poucas vezes o texto terá sido mais preciso. Poucas vezes terá tido esta oportunidade de desagradável e inoportunamente questionar a prisão de uma sociedade colonialista tão idêntica à prisão da sociedade lisboeta, tão mortífera uma quanto a outra. Uma apenas menos obviamente letal. A liberdade é apenas a consciência dessa série de padrões pré-estabelecidos e a capacidade de nos sacudirmos deles. O problema, claro, como também aqui é visível, é que essa consciência causa primacialmente uma sensação de surpresa, receio e aturdimento, pois que se fica face a uma disponibilidade absoluta para um real não delimitável e sem fim à vista.

Mas gostaríamos ainda de referir um outro ponto da apresentação de Maria Alzira Seixo d'*O esplendor de Portugal*. Diz-nos a crítica que o feminismo, conjuntamente com o pós-colonialismo, são as teorias base de construção do texto antuniano. Se é verdade que existe uma fortíssima enunciação do feminino,"Por que sou mulher" (107), em contraste com *Os cus de Judas*, por exemplo, afirmar que se trata de um mundo sobre a independência feminina, no caso de Isilda ou de Clarisse, parece-nos um desvio. Não que as mulheres não governem o destino da história pessoal da família, mas estão totalmente ausentes da História, e separar uma situação de análise pós-colonialista de outra feminista será, no nosso ponto de vista, discutível. Os dois espaços têm que coabitar ou um não estará completo sem o outro. E aqui, António Lobo Antunes narra o real, e não o imaginário ou sequer o desejável. Estamos longe do mundo hedonístico de Germano Almeida—ele sim, capaz de unir dois universos no espaço da construção do desejo. António Lobo Antunes narra, simplesmente, o presente minado pela falta primeira, a do materno. E sobre esse ponto de vista, no ensaio de Maria Alzira Seixo ter-se-á escapado o desenvolvimento da frase:

> Porque sou mulher. Porque sou mulher e as mulheres não morrem como os homens dado faltar-lhes o mesmo peso de medo na carne, a mesma espessura nos

> ossos de inocência e solidão: transformam-se em fantasmas ou nem fantasmas, coisas vagas [...] olhando-nos do quintal ou da cozinha, penteadas e abanando leques e regressando à terra à medida que nos olham [...]. Porque sou mulher. Porque sou mulher durante anos e anos, depois do funeral, encontrei sem surpresa a minha mãe a tricotar na cadeira de baloiço da varanda, chamava-a baixinho, quase sem som, dentro de mim
> — Mãe. (107)

Perante a continuação do parágrafo, é evidente que se trata não de uma afirmação de um universo feminista mas sim da afirmação da ausência do materno. A falta do materno que aflige Carlos, Clarisse, Rui e Isilda. Isilda que não pode ser mãe porque jamais foi filha, no pleno sentido do termo—à hora da morte é Josefa quem a mãe de Isilda pede, não a filha. A falta do materno que é a mesma falta da terra-mãe, dividida entre ser mátria e pátria, incapaz de ser a frátria, que ideologicamente todos necessitariam que fosse.

A obra *O esplendor de Portugal* encimada pela vocação bélica do seu hino nacional desgarrado, cronologicamente insensato no sentido mais profundo do termo, será um espaço privilegiado do romance de António Lobo Antunes precisamente por isto: por ser capaz de estratificar feminino e masculino, família e sociedade dentro do mesmo registo de comunicação. Se o que Maria Alzira Seixo pretende dizer com feminismo é a afirmação de uma voz do sexo feminino, talvez o seja, mas o problema ultrapassa em muito essa verbalização. *O esplendor de Portugal* é talvez a enunciação do ódio necessário à tomada de consciência do *eu,* seja o *eu* a terra ou o homem ou a mulher, que concentrados num espaço caótico em que os papéis formais de cada um são impossíveis de ser mantidos, resultam talvez na nossa única mal-entendida "benfeitoria": "Contra os canhões, marchar, marchar." Os canhões de dentro contra dentro apontados podem ser assim espoletados:

> Enfrentando o ódio: "nunca foram meus netos, preferiram o sangue do teu marido e do teu pai, não quiseram nem uma gota da minha família" (228), diz a mãe de Isilda;

> "de forma que não era eu, era a minha mãe e o homem e o meu pai que ele detestava em mim, o meu pai que não pegava numa caçadeira, não descia as escadas, não os rebentava a tiro" (301), diz Clarisse;

> "a única criatura no mundo de quem o Carlos gostou, não gostava de mim, não gostava dos irmãos, não gostava da mulher, gostava dela, empoleirado no navio a recomendar-me que a tratasse bem, a Maria da Boa Morte" (26), diz Isilda.

Enfrentar o ódio é enfrentar a pulsão da morte que a "Maria da Boa Morte" tão onomasticamente representa, e enfrentar essa pulsão é a única forma de continuar vivo. O texto pode enganadoramente indiciar um espaço de afirmação de um poder feminino vs. masculino. Leia-se o seguinte trecho onde Isilda comenta os sentimentos do marido e manifesta aquilo que pode ser rapidamente entendido como uma solidariedade feminina elogiada pelo universo narrativo:

> [...] sem se preocupar com o filho na ideia de que ao preocupar-se me magoava quando era o facto
> (que ele não compreendia dado que os homens nada compreendem de nós)
> de não se preocupar que me doía e eu
> entre mulheres
> para a empregada do refeitório, não entre uma branca e uma preta, entre mulheres. (91)

Ora aqui, se formos um pouco mais fundo, encontramos a mesma preocupação fundamental com o materno. Um materno que se joga entre mulheres mas ao qual os homens não escapam, pois veja-se como existe uma consciência de que o pai não se preocupa "na ideia" de que não preocupar-se será a melhor atitude e, portanto, preocupando-se.

Se utilizarmos a técnica que o próprio autor utiliza como modo de construção romanesca poderemos, leitores, construir a exorcização dos medos e fantasmas do espaço colonial do outro lado do espelho. Ou seja, se invertermos as descrições, à semelhança do que cada personagem antuniana faz, ficamos com um reino em que colonizadores se vêem como os colonizados e vice-versa. E esta alteração de papéis é provavelmente a melhor forma de destruição do regime estatal, mas acima de tudo mental, onde se constroem as estruturas de poder, políticas e sociológicas, e as de afecto, maternas, paternas e filiais. Parece-nos, afinal, que não são só os países africanos de expressão portuguesa que necessitam de construir a identidade nacional. É igualmente tão necessário que Portugal possa refazer uma nova identidade em que o passado se possa confrontar como arquivo de memória e não como, nas palavras de Maria Alzira Seixo, lugar de má-consciência, espaço que comporte a compreensão das nossas

limitações e que permita a instauração de um novo momento narcísico.

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The Setting in *O esplendor de Portugal*

Daniel Zubía Fernández

Abstract: In *O esplendor de Portugal,* the historical setting constitutes the source for a corrosive fiction: the Portuguese colonial past for those who stayed and those who returned. Thus, the life of three siblings is notably marked by history, by the collapsing colonial order, and by war. They exemplify, in the background of *O esplendor,* the division of the artificial family unity and how that past splendor was not regained, either in Angola or in Portugal. Facts and family are demythologized by how the three descendants are presented in *O Esplendor de Portugal.*

As António Lobo Antunes asserted in an interview in 1996, "los portugueses venimos de los escombros dejados por una dictadura" (Juaristo 59), the Salazarist dictatorship that intended to rearticulate the Portuguese nation as the unity of the mainland and the colonies after the failure of the Portuguese First Republic. That targeted rearticulation left the rubble referred to by Antunes and that depicted in his novel *O esplendor de Portugal* (OEP), with the parallel decline of both a Portuguese family and the Portuguese colonial order before and after the Revolution of 1974 and, indeed, with the subsequent rupture of the "Portuguese unit," profusely glorified and expanded by the Salazarist regime. The depiction of the remaining rubble in OEP clashes with the echoes of the "brumas da história," echoes of the glorious and misty past of the dictatorship and the mist that sickly haunts the characters in OEP. By linking the quotidian present with the African past in a dialogue "com os segmentos pessoais do percurso subjetivo" (Seixo 485), Antunes underlines the centrality

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 193-202.
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of memory, both personal and abstract, in OEP, where each character recalls a childhood in a past in ruins before the partition of the family and of the so-called unity of the Portuguese nation: the artificial unity of the mainland with the overseas provinces. Thus, Antunes unmasks "the articulation of the Portuguese nation constructed as an inherent political destiny that derives from God and Christianity" (Ornelas 65), prolonged in the colonies and exemplified in this family. In addition, in the novel, Antunes calls into question the absurdity of life, the absurdity of Salazarism, of militarism and the war. Therefore, this supposed splendor contrasts with a post-colonial time and space in the margins of contemporary Portuguese society. So, human degradation is evident in both Lisbon and Angola, in an appeal to "a experiência do lugar e do acto que a faz" (Seixo 501), for each character in that family, for each being in that broken unity, both the family and the motherland. As Ribeiro reveals, this experience of the place and the space constitutes a feature of recent Portuguese prose, relating that "the collective loss of memory and an excess of personal memory" (186) coexists in the urban existence of the characters with "the violent process of deterritorialization and re-territorialization, marked by individual and collective loss" (187). Carlos, Rui, and Clarisse undergo these processes as siblings, settling for the first time in the center of the metropolis after witnessing the rupture of the family unity, of the colonial unity. This rupture constitutes a consequence of Salazar's willpower to turn the "empire in Africa into a national issue" and of the aim to recreate "the dream of building a Brazil in Africa" (Ribeiro 154), latent in the daily lives of these siblings.

In her extensive study of Antunes's novels, Maria Alzira Seixo stresses how the Portuguese author displays "uma meditação histórica que tem por base o quotidiano e anónimo acontecer do mundo contemporâneo" (488), a reflection of some contemporary anonymous individuals subordinated by that past, unaware that they are searching for their identity in Lisbon. Therefore, the questioning of the official version of history is presented by the way facts are integrated in the fiction through the character's life, through the collapse of a Portuguese family in Angola. This constant awareness, the blend of both facts and fictions, is present in the prose of Antunes since his first novel was published in 1979, having the status of "un cruce sútil de las historias singulares con los momentos singulares" (Mourão 658) of contemporary Portuguese history in an attempt to dovetail, in OEP, the absurdity of the life of Carlos, Rui, and Clarisse in the metropolis. A crossroads of history and prose where Salazar's regime's debacle in Africa clashes with the imperial rhetoric of empire

by revealing, not only how stiff that rhetoric was, but also the way these elements determined and subordinated the life of a Portuguese family, of each individual in OEP. In the novel, Antunes reveals how the splendor, the same that presents the aura of "bilho ou do prestígio de uma nação-repartida en 'provincias' ultramarinas" (Seixo 320), as established by the upgrading 1951 reformation, is non-existent.

Consequently, facts and history outline the "pano de fundo da trama romanesca" (Marinho 293), where a family unit "encuentra en la Historia, la otra cara, el reflejo de su propio abismo" (Barella), an abyss where the reader, after having listened to the notes and the echoes that evoke a glorious past in the Portuguese national anthem, encounters, on Christmas Eve of 1995, various voices and echoes of a separated family in Lisbon and in Angola. Echoes and facts that haunt the characters in OEP, as Faria notes, in "o entrecruzamento da perspectiva história e da configuração de subjetividades," as these selves are marked both by the collapsing order set up by the Estado Novo and by the one established after 1974. There is, however, as Seixo notes, "um complexo de attitudes que envolve a desgraça do colonizado tanto como a do colonizador, as atitudes de agressão e prepotência visiveis em ambos lados" (501), the attitudes and violence that marked the returned, divided individuals of this family in Ajuda, Damaia, and Estoril, as well as those who remained in Angola.

The question of the role played by the traditional concept of family in the engineered Salazarist regeneration of Portugal is essential to understand the *pano de fondo* in OEP and its function. As a result of this, the novel unfolds against a backdrop where the Salazarist notions of the "restoration of the nation, with its social, corporate and colonial policies and the organic doctrine based on the family" (Pimentel 124) operates as the mentioned *pano de fondo* illustrated with the dissolution of the family unity in OEP. Since the background to the novel illustrates how the family, which was regarded as "the nucleus of the Estado Novo and of Portugal's rebirth" (Pimentel 124), and which was going to restore Portugal's splendor, is disintegrated. For that reason, the demystification is evident when the novel opens as "tempo de enunciação" (Seixo 532) on Christmas Eve 1995, the night when Western society celebrates the birth of whom "velava pela tranquilidade universal e pelo bom andamento da sociedade Portuguesa" (Medina 17) and the first Christian family in a humble shed. This is the very night when the reader encounters Carlos, Rui, and Clarisse (as well as Lena), who neither gather that eve, nor meet for the Christian celebration of the family despite the wishes

of the eldest brother, Carlos. Consequently, we attend, from various perspectives, the supposedly glorious unity, the dissolution of that family in a reconstruction of "um saber que reside na memória e no incosciente de uma comunidade" (Marinho 292), to the voice of each anonymous urban individual with a latent present past.

According to Fusi, Salazarism aimed at "la desmovilización de las masas" (126) in order to overcome the social and religious polarization of the First Republic and to regenerate the country. Subsequently, as that mentality regarded this polarization as the first step into the decomposition of a society and, to overcome this process and return to "unos pretendidos orígenes de la comunidad nacional" (Loff 62), the hand of the Catholic Church followed the path. Directing this regeneration, as Medina notes, Salazarism regarded family as the "pedra angular" (Medina 29) of society and it was intended to regenerate Portugal starting from its foundation: the family. Besides, the natural environment of a family was rural, where man acted in accordance with nature: the space of the Portuguese little house (a Casinha Portuguesa). In conformity with the image of the family reproduced in the pictures of the "Lição de Salazar" ["The Lesson of Salazar"], enthusiastically explained by Medina, the Christian family was regarded as the basis and the proper mirror of society. Consequently, the so-called basic trinity was established with the father, the mother, and the offspring, the pyramid of the foundation of the New State. As a result, the Family was conceived as a Christian patriarchal unity where, first, the father, a good, generous and respectful person, was the most honorable being and visible Head of that unity, as well as the only one who worked outside the home. Second, the mother, the loving being who was in charge of the household, the kitchen, and the education of the children (and where farming was regarded as an extension of the duties of the house), represented the pure image of the person who sacrificed herself. These members of a unity must follow a clear hierarchy that reflects the patterns they are expected to act in accordance with. The prototype illustrates how the hierarchy should be preserved by the eldest son (*o rapaz*), who was to head to a new family and to whom the other brothers and sisters (those that he should care for) should pay tribute as the future acting head. It is in this paradigm that the sister should be aware of her position as the "futura condição de mulher doméstica" (Medina 30) at the hand of her future husband, transferring to him the same delight and joy she used to welcome her father, as a proper loving woman.

As a result, the notion of the role of the family in Salazarist Portugal,

both on the mainland and in the colonies, constituted the foundation where "repousa a constituição da sociedade" (Medina 32). This was a society, an integrated homeland (*a nação*) of the metropolis and the overseas provinces (so called after the 1950 constitutional revision) embodied in a unity, *a Nação Portuguesa,* "a single multi-racial nation, spread around the world" (Pimentel 126) and subject to the metropolis. Hence, both the Estado Novo and the Catholic Church were in charge of "civilizing and evangelizing local peoples and assuring the multi-racial and pluri-continental integrity of the empire" (Pimentel 126). On that account, Portuguese families settled in the overseas provinces were acting as an extension of the metropolis in the regeneration of the country and as the civilizing agents of the colonies. However, as Isilda's father openly explains, what brought them to Angola was not money nor wealth but "pretos sem dinheiro que nos dessem a ilusão do dinheiro e do poder" (Antunes 255), the very illusion that was denied to them in the fatherland as, in fact, they were regarded as outcast people in Portugal. So, these were outcast beings willing to live in humble small villages next to the Africans and those left behind despite the official propaganda. Therefore, in OEP, Antunes is debunking the idea of Portuguese colonial policy as "an encounter with the Other" (Simões da Silva 30) and of the apparently seductive egalitarian Lusotropicalist image as a multiracial form of art adopted by Salazarism. In fact, as reflected in the novel, the motto was to appropriate the other, the African, from his own soil and his houses as Isilda's father confesses to her.

In line with Seixo's remarks on the importance of houses in OEP as spaces "que se preenchem de uma espesura psicológica, social, cultural e ideological que faz a personagem movimentar-se como pessoa" (Seixo 477), in OEP these spaces are closely related to "lugar, família, tempo e separação" (Seixo 30). So, the different houses manifest the fragmentation of the family back in the metropolis: Carlos is the eldest and the one who received the family house in Ajuda where he lives with Lena; the isolated epileptic Rui lives in Damaia in a sanatorium after having being expelled by Carlos from the family house in Damaia; Clarisse lives in an apartment in Estoril and guarantees her economical position with various affairs; and Isilda remains, next to Maria da Boa Morte, in Angola after having been expelled from the family plantation. Therefore, houses exemplify the complexity of the novel as different examples of the dissolution of the family since the house constitutes the real space for the Christmas celebration of the family as a result of the aggression against the Angolan soil that haunts the isolated siblings in each of their houses in Lisbon

and surroundings.

The characters are introduced as piercing voices from different houses, each a solitary person that suffers "the trauma of partition which is subsequently memorialised" (Cleary 2) which is related, as well, with their experience of Africa in the configuration of the different subjectivities, of the various voices. Eduardo, the father, died as an alcoholic and his voice is almost absent from the novel because he remains in the colonial past of the plantation house. It is definitely not the respectful father pictured in the *Lição.* Then, Carlos's first section opens in the house and with the rejected invitation to his two siblings to his house to celebrate Christmas. These are voices such as Carlos's, the eldest mulatto and illegitimate son who suddenly realizes "del tempo que passara desde que chegámos de África" (11). He departed from Angola eighteen years ago and his attitude in the novel exemplifies the rupture with the image of the *Lição*'s model son as explained by Medina. Hence, the son is in charge, but of guaranteeing the continuity of the family unity by looking after the members of that unity. He feels responsible for all of them and for maintaining the principle of hierarchy and so should "ser respeitado e amado" (65) by the rest of the members for assuring the continuity of the family with his wife, Lena. Carlos is the son who received, despite being mulatto, the family flat in Ajuda where the newly arrived two brothers and the sister have settled as a unit back in the homeland. Carlos does not succeed in the role of eldest brother as he is the person who expels both the ill Rui and unmarried Clarisse from the house while saying that he had to put up with "sem um protesto três anos seguidos suportando até aos límites da paciência as maluquices de um e os caprichos da outra" (69). At the same time, Carlos fails as he does not open any of the letters sent by Isilda, breaking his responsibility as head of the family as explained before in this article and, consequently, in charge of Isilda. He never feels accepted as a mulatto because he recalls when they were children, Isilda would show Rui and Clarisse to the guests at home but "se era eu as bochechas lhe caíam como se perdesse malares e me enxotava numa lufa-lufa antes de que pudessem ver-me" (124). This rejection was unanimous among the family and only the honest Maria da Boa Morte, the loyal employee, treated him as an equal by addressing him with "tu" and revealing to him his nature: "tu és preto" (95). In addition, his relation with Lena is fading away; they have no descendants and he does not conceive of a life on his own, not a proper state for a man, we are told, as the houses of single men stink of "leite azedo, cigarro frio, recheio de almofada" (120). Carlos is an

ambivalent character in the sense that he keeps waiting for an answer from Rui and Clarisse and, however, he stores in Ajuda the pile of unopened letters that Isilda had sent from Angola. The dual essence and experience of Africa determine the configuration of Carlos as a contrasting subjectivity. Thus, on one side he regards Angola as a peaceful "casa e a minha família e Angola" (65) and on the other he reacts against Angola. Duality coexists and, as he explains, "chamavam um Carlos que era eu em elas não era eu nem era eu em eu" (121), as the example of the "divisão do sujeito" (Seixo 337) and the implications of partition for a mulatto who does not recognize himself.

The second part of the novel leads us through the "percepções do mundo" (Seixo 340) exemplified by the lonely Rui's unawareness of the world surrounding him and the implications of his acts as reflected in the beginning of this segment. While the disease Rui suffers from determines the way the character is presented in this segment of the novel, it strikes one how, after the regular visit to the doctor in Malanje, he states how "a minha mãe comprava-me um bolo de creme e a seguir à consulta voltava para casa a sacudir-me as migalhas da camisa e a chorar" (143). Thus, the ill Rui is the son who exemplifies a privileged condition and this justifies Rui's privileges. Since he admits "sentia-me importante por estar doente e ir morrer" (144), Rui remarks how this makes him feel important both in Angola and in Damaia, where Clarisse simply visits him only as a result of his condition. Medina states that hierarchy and gender were two principles that ruled the family so the fact that the legitimate son was epileptic confers Rui with a distinct role. Pity is a shared feeling in the family towards him and he takes advantage of "a situação de privilégio que a situação de doente lhe confere" (Seixo 339). Thus, he is allowed to behave as he pleases and this reflects "certa medida e impotência dos pais" (Antunes 341) in his upbringing, of not acting according to certain values due to his condition. His existence is concentrated on watching television, eating, and trying to be happy while none of them would stop him from "estrangular pombos, incapaz de impedir-me de ser feliz" (201) because this was the way he was brought up in Angola as his aim is just to be happy. In order to gain this happiness, he allows few things to stop him. In connection to that, his violent reactions against animals reveal the codes of behavior towards those regarded as inferior when it comes to justify unjustifiable acts, illustrating the unlimited colonial power towards beings beyond him. Besides, when Isilda, back from the visit to the doctor, leaves him alone to meet her lover, the chief policeman, Rui recognizes in his mother the woman in her dubious behavior and his

own loneliness. He confesses that he is annoyed that Isilda did not allow him to play any dirty trick while he was waiting in the car because as "eu querer livrar-me dela e respirar e não podia" (242), stopping him from breathing. As a result, the shaping of Rui denotes how the experience of Angola and colonization, of hypocrisy and his personal circumstances modeled his subjectivity. Rui is an ill person whose personal happiness is a priority as it was for the colonizers in Africa, those rejected in the metropolis.

As underlined by Seixo, Clarisse and Isilda are the two female voices that share a close relation with their fathers, a state of independence and a lack of affection that unveils the prescribed image of loving and loved mother and daughter in the *Lição*. The effect is also underlined by placing an unmarried Clarisse in her own flat and by leaving the widow Isilda in Angola away from her descendants. Besides, by saying, "quando voltei a Portugal do que mais gostei" (269), Clarisse opens up the third section in OEP by regarding herself as a returned self to Portugal. To begin with, she portrays an ironic urban scene with some heavy men jumping off a tram and she seems happier in a city, clearly different from the two previous brothers. Certainly, she seems happy back in Lisbon as a way of being independent from the social conventions where she was brought up. Similarly, throughout the last section of the novel, she emerges as the most detached character, visibly unmasking the image of the loving daughter, the mother-to-be, and openly satirizing an ideal marriage. Undoubtedly, Clarisse's rupture with the role of the daughter is evident since the fact that her life is not restricted to the house as "futura condição de mulher doméstica" (Medina 30) or to the role of the mother who sacrifices herself for non-existent children. Since Rui reveals earlier in the novel, just when Clarisse was in secondary school, how she brought with her, out of her mom's sphere, not only the scandal of "uma filha despida como uma cancanista e maquilhada com um palhaço" (217) but the scandal of the time when she went for an abortion. Clarisse's attitude underlines her unconventional character and personal determination. Also, she is regarded as a prostitute for her way of living and we learn from her father how he is ready to cheat in a game just to make her happy. In contrast to the other members of the family, Clarisse seems characterized from a different angle: a more individual, detached, and slightly sensitive character concerned just with what Rui experiences in his crises, who, however, considers getting revenge on Carlos by not phoning him, by not contacting him and expressing the rupture with what he represents. Like her brothers, she is presented as a solitary person in that her

lover Luis Filipe seems indifferent towards her and does not satisfy her. Overall, Clarisse finds out that she is in the homeland of her family for "assumindo uma sinergia positiva" (Seixo 335), lacking an identity as she awakes afraid of her own name.

To conclude, this dialogue in a present that locates these demobilized personal segments in an everyday Lisbon, this present that brings them back to Angola and to the plantation in Baixa de Cassanje, to the past before the partition of the unity and family is developed in OEP as the *pano de fondo* of the oeuvre, echoing the fallacious splendor of a family and a past. The setting shows the demythologization of the Salazarist conception of family unity; the attempt to regenerate the broken Portuguese unity of the mainland with the overseas provinces. This *pano de fondo* constitutes the stage as we encounter the life of these siblings that settle for the first time in Portugal and who do not speak. So, lacking a homeland, Carlos, Rui, and Clarisse are depicted alone, without identity, not having created a new unity of a family and, in Lisbon on Christmas Eve with the background memories of Angola, of the failure of colonization as well as the post 1974 wars and regimes. These are memories that take us back to that time of a supposed splendor and those that unmask the official splendor of the unity of the family and of the nation before and after the departure of the siblings from Angola. These siblings exemplify, in the background of OEP, the division of the artificial family unity and how that past splendor was not regained. The three of them are trying to communicate with their individual pasts while they are not capable of conversing among themselves. As a result, Carlos evidences the failure of the eldest son, Rui's representation of sickness confers on him a distinct role exemplifying unjustified privileges, and Clarisse, who appears as a lonely person who needs sleeping tablets, away from the ideal female image portrayed in the *Lição*. Each of them exemplifies the absolute division and estrangement of the family unity away from Angola, unaware that the African encounter was based on occupation of the land the consequences of their presence on that soil.

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Acts of Literature: Notes on *The Return of the Caravels*

Leela Gandhi

Abstract: The last two decades or so have witnessed a profound theoretical reaction against cultural and aesthetic claims of "literariness." Despite its political appeal, however, such a critical attitude too often forgets the capacity of all canonical cultures to challenge and critique themselves internally. This paper reads the work of António Lobo Antunes, in particular his *The Return of the Caravels*, as an exemplary instance of such internal critique, reworking *The Lusiads* to yoke imperial fantasies of the Age of Discovery to harsher memories of the Portuguese occupation of Angola. Yet, no simple work of counter-imperial demystification, Lobo Antunes's novel does not simply dismiss or destroy the rich epic texture of *The Lusiads*. Instead, it strives to "recycle" the tropes and allusions of the earlier work into a new ethical fabric for our times. In so doing, it also provides an occasion to re-think the value of "literariness" itself: its elasticity, capacity for metamorphoses and status as a record of all that is not only worst but also best in a culture, imperial or anti-imperial, European or otherwise.

A few years ago, in the midst of a colloquium on postcolonial theory at the University of Lisbon, my friend Maria Alzira Seixo—interrupting the proceedings with characteristic and sudden urgency—said to me: "But Leela, what about literature?" Her query, indeed let me call it her challenge, referred, of course, to the increasing marginalisation of "literature" in Literature Stud-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 203-11.
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ies. But it spoke also to the profound theoretical reaction, over the last two decades or so, against cultural and aesthetic claims of "literariness." As we might recall, following in the footsteps of Edward Said, postcolonialism, especially, has launched a discursive war against the Western literary canon on the grounds that its pleasures are hopelessly vitiated with imperial structures of attitude and reference. Thus, where once (in the halcyon days of the nineteenth-century novel) the business of reading was haunted by the guilt of unearned leisure, postmodern reading is newly susceptible to the guilt of imperialist collaboration, a sort of armchair colonialism that criticism must combat with ideological determination.

The following paper is a response to this critical climate and so to Maria Alzira Seixo's question. Its twofold aim is, first, to call for a ceasefire between criticism and literature, and second, given the specificities of my own theoretical persuasion, to demonstrate some ways in which an anti-colonial imperative can fruitfully combine with a defence of literature. I will, however, fulfil my second aim only by proxy, speaking not for myself but of António Lobo Antunes's *The Return of the Caravels*, a novel that offers an exemplary instance of an anti-colonial, pro-literary practice and that demonstrates, *contra* postcolonialism, the capacity of canonical literary cultures to correct and to challenge themselves internally. All literary production, as Harold Bloom has argued, comprises a recurring struggle between the beginning poet or *ephebe* and their powerful forbears. The pages of *The Return of the Caravels*, I submit, are fraught with the labour of this struggle, predicating the very act of literature on a contiguous refusal, in this case, of the imperial past.

The simple anticolonialism of *Return* is irrefutable even at first glance. Available to reading as a dystopian sequel to Camões's *The Lusiads*, the novel begins where the epic ends, amplifying the untold story of da Gama's return to Portugal following his adventure of "discovery": "The sea ever calm, the wind blowing ever gently, they continued on their way until at length the land of their birth, the land they had never ceased to long for, came once more in sight" (Camões 246). Seizing upon the unspoken conclusion of *The Lusiads*, *Return* renders the occluded scene of imperial homecoming into a linguistic orgy of demystification, a journey to the underworld reminiscent in its mood and metaphoricity of Aime Cesaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1955).

Cesaire's manifesto diagnoses colonialism as the pernicious harbinger of civilisational death. A civilisation that partakes of colonial adventure, he writes, "is a dying civilisation"; and with every act of colonialism "civilisa-

tion acquires another dead weight [...] a gangrene sets in, a centre of infection begins to spread" (9, 13). It is such images of death and disease that are made to cleave as authorial opprobrium to the disembarking colonials of Antunes's novel. The man "Luis," tethered on arrival to the putrefying corpse of his father, will find himself incarcerated in a sanatorium for colonial returnees, witness, with his compatriots, to the death of Lisbon: "[...] accompanying the false guilt of some funeral waiting for the night of cemetery cedars where the deceased evaporated [...] smothered by artificial flowers that smelled like the gauze cherries on hats and which he confused with the naphthalene smell of death" (Antunes 200-201). Elsewhere, coloniser Manuel de Sousa de Sepulveda will seek his fetish in a stuffed bull's head infested with "ladybugs that had nested in the nostrils and [...] moths that were devouring the tight skin of the jaw" (100). The office of the redoubtable Diogo Cão will, in similar vein, conceal a "coffin shop [...] reeking with the funereal outpourings of gladiolus sprays and the odour of the little wax hands of sick people's pledges" (168-69). And throughout the novel, sex and death, forgetting their therapeutic opposition, will combine as collaborators giving the lie to life itself in the guise of "funereal" prostitutes, "offering truck drivers the dead pleasures of sex" (112, 102).

So we might say: speaking in the harsh diagnostic idiom of a Cesaire or a Fanon, Lobo Antunes categorically refuses any productive (or life-giving) symbiosis between colonialism and civilisation. "I suddenly understood," as da Gama says in the novel, "the extreme emptiness of command, no matter how many monuments are built at the anchorages of caravels conquering the world" (159). But—and here is the question that most concerns us—how is this conscientious anticolonial verdict linked to Antunes's defence of literature? Or what—as Maria Alzira demanded—about literature? To engage with this question let us, for a moment, place *The Return of the Caravels* within that complex tradition of poetic *apologia* germane to modern European literary history. For, I wish to argue, it is here that we might obtain the critical building blocks of our argument.

Referring in the first instance to English literary history, we can discern in a genealogy that descends from Renaissance literary theory through Romanticism to *fin de siècle* aestheticism/Decadence an accretive defence of the imagination conducted in the name of literature, art, poesy. Markedly in its early modern origins, and then more subtly, this tradition of poetic *apologia* is simultaneously and inextricably posed as a critique of history.

Allow me to explain. As is well known, emerging under the aegis of Renaissance humanism, the defence of poetry convention took shape as a belated rejoinder to the early and medieval Christian bias against "untruth." And in an intellectual milieu where Church Councils of 1529, 1565 and 1624 continued to proscribe, in the name of truth, the use of fictious tales in sermons; and where an eager exhumation of antiquity disclosed, among others, Plato's famous denunciation of poets as liars in *The Republic*, poetry/fiction found itself in severe disciplinary competition with history.

In the ensuing discursive battle, with history laying claim to the privileges of veracity, and literature labouring to delineate apt grounds for its own legitimacy, a crucial separation of domains occurred, distinguishing fact from fiction, empiricism from imagination, etc. Within this schema—perilously abbreviated here—history came gradually to stand for the domain of "similitude" (or familiar and knowable things), and literature/poesy for the domain of "alterity" (or unfamiliar and unknowable things). Thus Mazzoni, much like Tasso, allows poets priority in telling of "all those things of which the people for whose benefit the poem is written has no firm and sure knowledge." But poets, he adds, must give way to historians on all those occasions, "when the events have happened in the present time and in the country of the people" being described (qtd. in Weinberg 63). Thus, history becomes *eo epso* the factual narrative of nationalism, and poetry a speaking on behalf of that which is foreign, different, unknown.

This separation of domains becomes sharply visibly in Elizabethan England where, as one critic observes, "History was written and read as a spur to patriotism, as the ground of Protestantism, as a text-book of private and public virtue and national prosperity" (Shepherd 39). By contrast and albeit "negatively," disqualified as it was from the order of the same, literariness obtained a potential freedom from the imperatives of nationalism and—if it chose—a congruent utopian empathy with foreign places and peoples. Such is the freedom possessively claimed by Sir Philip Sidney in his *An Apology for Poetry* (1595) and, some centuries later, by Percy Bysshe Shelley's in *A Defence of Poetry* (1840), which claims for poets the unique capacity for "going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, *not our own*" (33; my emphasis). These principles, we might add, António Lobo Antunes understands with a rare acuity, continually giving his readers the sense that he can only write fiction legitimately, if at all, *contra* nationalism,

contra similitude.

While I do not wish to reduce Antunes's work to a rigid or schematic re-enactment of the Poetry versus History tradition in European letters, *The Return of the Caravels* is visibly animated by a nagging dissension between literariness and historicism: official chroniclers police national borders suddenly under threat from a crowd of immigrating Portuguese and Spanish poets; the monarchal Dom Sebastião "robs" the decadent aesthete Oscar Wilde; the carnivalesque excess of "the labyrinthine market" contrasts sharply with the utilitarian "cement building" of officialdom, and so on (149, 3-4). These framing oppositions in the novel, I propose, obtain their complex anticolonial significance via Hegel, for the contest between history and poetry that we have been considering so far achieves a specifically colonial dimension in the German philosopher's influential *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*. To elucidate: In this work, zealous as ever in the task of allocating civilisational priority, Hegel makes a crucial distinction between those cultures (good and progressive) that possess history and those (bad and retrograde) that possess only poetry. Thus India, if gifted with "splendid works of poetry," "nevertheless has no history." Only Europe, Hegel insists, with its universal social forms is able to produce the empirically grounded "prose of history" (136). An enmeshment in poetics, therefore, brings with it a civilisational distance from Europe and one (we might add again) that Antunes exploits to the maximum.

But what does it mean to be historical? To have history? It means, in the paraphrase of postmodernism and postcolonialism, to undergo the experience of colonialism: as recipients to suffer a command to supersede indigenous pasts; as agents or actors to participate, in the words of Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, in an "annihilating dialectical magic" intent on "the inexorable plot of racism" (24: 70-1). To elaborate further: the self-positing (and pre-eminently European) subject/agent of Hegelian history achieves radical freedom through an expressive unity with the world. But this, let us be warned, is unity imperial-style. For, desperately seeking an external embodiment that expresses him, the Hegelian subject-of-history constantly finds himself faced with an alien, foreign and intractable world that he (lacking the gift of poetry) must ruthlessly excise, cancel, and negate, grinding its rough surfaces into a mirror which reflects him always, everywhere, *ad nauseam*.

History, in these terms, heralds the triumph of narcissistic subjectivity—one marked by a chronic allergy to alterity that requires, furthermore, the negation/co-option of different worlds. So it is, as Robert Young writes, that

Hegelian world history, "not only involves what Fredric Jameson describes as the wresting of freedom from the realm of necessity but always also the creation, subjection and final appropriation of Europe's others" (2). But what next? What, if any, are the existential rewards of colonial historicism? Having excised, negated, appropriated Europe's others, the Hegelian subject-of-history, as we know from *The Phenomenology of Mind*, arrives—dare we say "returns"—to a shared community based on reciprocal recognition. Such recognition, however, can only be achieved among counterparts in a milieu where, to borrow some words from Charles Taylor, my interlocutor sees "in me another, but one that is not foreign, which is at one with himself" (153). To put this simply, and somewhat opportunistically, history, *à la* Hegel, offers its (colonial) votaries and adventurers the consolation of a homecoming to a familiar community whose members, as Hegel puts it, "recognise themselves as [...] recognising each other" (231).

It is, arguably, this Hegelian reward of reciprocal recognition that Camões's voyagers anticipate upon their homeward return "to the land of their birth" at the end of *The Lusiads*. Yet it is precisely the consolation of recognition that Antunes withholds from the colonial populations that flock into Lisbon in *The Return of the Caravels*. Through such withholding he gains illustrious admission to that long tradition of European poetic *apologia*: imposing alterity in the place of similitude, estranging the dubious gains of history within the competing space of literature. His belated colonial *arrivants* bearing the weight of a colonial enterprise extending dubiously from the age of discoveries through to the bloody rebellion in 1970's Angola, find themselves adrift in a world that they do not recognise and in which they are unrecognisable. After fifty-three years in a cubicle in Bissau, the man with the deranged wife finds in Lisbon a baroque stage-set, a science-fiction fantasy that allows no access to the quotidian, wherein a hall of distorting mirrors brutally severs his image from memories of a pre-colonial childhood in Portugal (Antunes 42).

Manoel de Sousa de Sepulveda suffers a parallel alienation, returning home to the inhospitality of a grumbling brother struggling to inhabit a city in which he is himself utterly foreign and deterritorialised: "Take a good look at somebody who doesn't know what socialism is all about, an illiterate [...]. He's just arrived from Africa, poor fellow, he hasn't been here for a hundred years, he's been exploiting our little black comrades, he thinks the place belongs to him [...]" (63-64). And Vasco da Gama, no less, travelling back from the mess of history, contemplates "how almost everything had changed in Lisbon since

he'd embarked for Angola to live in the midst of the violent solitude of blacks" (93). The city, in turn, treats him like an unwelcome interloper: "They'd grown so old that the people of the city, who didn't recognise them, were flabbergasted at the pair of masked old men [...]. The children [...] surrounded them in an uproar of amused curiosity [...]. The women, selling vegetables, startled, froze in the middle of their vending shouts. The colours of the traffic got all mixed up as they passed [...]"(94).

If the agents of history fail in every way to achieve recognition in *The Return of the Caravels*, historicism is itself continually disrupted in the novel through the revolutionary action of literature. The "homogenous empty time" (252, 255) that Walter Benjamin once described as the key symptom of historical consciousness is ferociously diversified through the temporal anarchism of Antunes's anachronistic simultaneity: caravels jostle with oil tankers on the Tagus, the Infante Dom João's hunting mastiffs dine voraciously in the company of planters from Carmona, Diogo Cão claims simultaneously to have "commanded the Prince's ships all along the coast of Africa" and "worked in Angola as an inspector for the Water Company" (47). So too, the "empire of the self-same" (Cixous and Clement 78)—of tedious similitude—that Cixous detects in Hegelian historicism yields under figurative pressure to Antunes's oxymoronic imagination as he yokes differences together into a disruptive catalogue of monstrosities: "we put our baggage on the ground beyond the agapanthuses that mechanical sprinklers were aspersing [...] near the labourers who were working on the drains [...] leading to the soccer stadium [...] as the Cape Verdeans' tractors crossed paths with the carts carrying the tombs of princesses and piles of arabesques for altars" (2). And finally, the unified and self-positing subject of European (imperial) history, characterised by Mary Louise Pratt as the "seeing-man" who is, at all times and in all places "master-of-all-I-survey" (201-27), is replaced in the narrative by a chronically split and fragmented subject, neither fully observed nor observing, never securely in possession of his own tentative pronoun.

But, a small problem: if indeed, as I have been suggesting, the "magic" of Antunes's novel relies on his replay of the disciplinary and ideological opposition between literature and history, then how does he deal with the problem of the poet Luís, that could-be versifier for empire (that may-be author of *The Lusiads*), symbolically tethered to history through the burdensome corpse of his father which, as he complains plaintively, he simply "can't get rid of" (129)? The solution, we might remember, is both ingenious and startlingly lyrical in the midst of this excoriating novel. An experimental healer induces

Luis to sell him the cadaver for use as fertiliser for his medicinal plants thereby transforming the past into compost for an improved future and transcending, albeit briefly, the death that is colonialism.

So, to come to a conclusion: in his *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley makes a crucial distinction between disciplines that adhere to the Real and those that conform to the Imagination. In his words, "the cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave" (52). After Hegel, we might claim, as postcolonialism does, that the masters of the colonial encounter are in fact indistinguishable from the slaves they seek to vanquish. Or, as Cesaire puts it, "colonisation works to *decivilise* the colonizer, to *brutalise* him in the true sense of the word [...]" (13). This, it seems to me, is the "moral" if any, of *The Return of the Caravels*. But more so, and true to the hyperbolic imagination of its poetic predecessors, this novel firmly aligns literature on the side of the angels, reminding history that literature, Maria, is alive and kicking.

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From Lobo Antunes to Joseph Conrad: The Writing of Post-Colonial Maps and Phantoms

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Translated by Luís Mitras

Abstract: The article delineates some of the intertextual connections between *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo* by António Lobo Antunes and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and it takes as its point of departure the metaphor of the map, which stands for a critical reflection on the West's colonial and post-colonial adventure in Africa. Borrowing from David Spurr's analysis of imperial rhetoric, we further identify that these two works are revealing of how this imperial rhetoric remains present in the discourse and culture of the colonial and post-colonial worlds.

> *Hão-de existir barcos do Congo ao Alentejo, gente que se recorde*
> [There will be boats all the way from the Congo to Alentejo,
> those who will remember] (Antunes 498)

Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo, by António Lobo Antunes, suggests a wide number of readings, one of the most relevant of which is the novel's intertextual relationship with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This relationship is conveyed through the persistently employed allegory of "maps," which for Lobo Antunes functions as a provocative anaphora for the simulacrum of the action that allows, *inter alia*, dating the critical reading of the imperial project in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo, as with several of Antunes's other novels, fits into the category of texts Roland Barthes would have classified as "script-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 213-25.
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able." The purpose of these sort of texts is not to represent, but rather to implicate the reader in the process of production (13). The act of interpreting a text implies appreciating the many possible senses engendered by the narrative.

Thus, *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo* does not follow a logic or grammar of narration (internal order, the balancing out of parts, the representational model); this permits multiple points of entry into a reading of the text, multiple variations and movements in signification, points of escape (that which has been freed from a narrative Law), an opening up in signification that evokes the detritus of voices from other texts and differences that recur endlessly and never rest in a single meaning.

What we have before us is not a (mythological) narrative of action, but rather the vestiges or the questioning of a movement, of a map that suggests a (gnoseological) narrative of knowledge (Todorov 187). In Antunes's works action is ancillary—even secondary. Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness* it is not action that motivates the narrative, but rather a search for knowledge and truth: thus the suppression of any direct reference to Africa or the Congo universalizes the narrative, and it is possible to read it as a witness to the human condition and not merely as an account of Belgian colonization in the beginning of the twentieth century (Meyers).

There are elements, admittedly of a fragmentary nature, that suggest an intersection between the two works, *viz.*, the penchant of the narrator of the *Heart of Darkness* for maps and the constant presence of maps and their metonymic duplicates (reports, notebooks, files, memoranda, ramblings) in the work of Lobo Antunes. On the other hand, the ivory and diamond trades (the whiteness of both like the skin color of the colonizer) connect the two geographic areas on opposite sides of the border—the Congo and Angola. Likewise, the diamond trade in Angola began in the early years of the twentieth century (de Sá) and Marlow (similarly to Seabra / Miguéis / Morais, etc.) makes a trip whose apparent objective (the *target* in Antunes, *Kurtz* in Conrad) is never fully revealed and attained, while the characters in the novel by Antunes are also confronted with the unknown, darkness and horror.

If, on the one hand, *Heart of Darkness*, narrated by Marlow who tells us of his journey, begins with a boat trip down the Congo River, the epilogue of the novel by Lobo Antunes—which takes place in the period after the civil war—ironically (and provocatively) takes place on a boat in the bay of Luanda (which harks back to the beginning of Marlow's voyage and reminds

us that the colonial adventure never ended, that it has merely started anew in a different form); this is related, in a manner both perverse and innocent, through the narrative voice of a child who tells us about the business deal between a Frenchman, a Portuguese national, the owner of the leisure boat and an Angolan admiral. But above all, there is reference to the permanence of colonial prejudices, the lack of knowledge of the Other, and to opinions that are developed in various forms through the behavior and the multiple voices of the characters that inhabit *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo*.

Maps, Space, Writing

In the case of the novel by António Lobo Antunes, there are several types of searches, including for various kinds of knowledge. For example, one of them is the drawing of a "narrative map" that is in the process of continuous transformation, one that escapes (or seemingly escapes) authorial control, making the situation one of perplexed ignorance (comparable, in a certain way, to the Conradian metaphor of darkness) that overwhelms the place or site of writing—"[...] *como se diz isto, quem me ajuda a contar?* " ["(...) how do you say this; who'll help me to tell the tale?"] (53); "[...] *não faça perguntas, não procure entender, escreva assim, mal acabara de chegar e* [...]" ["(...) don't ask questions, don't try to understand, write like that, it will soon get there and ..."] (59)—and makes the authorial figure intervene in the diegetic process in an attempt to wrest control of the narrative. "*[P]erdão, eu é que escrevo o romance, o seu pai a comer*" ["sorry, but I'm the one who's writing the novel, your father's eating"] (108); here, he reflects on this kind of territorial invasion by a dark force that breaks through the measure of the narrative (in this voyage to another heart of darkness), which ultimately leaves its author disoriented: "*uma traineira não, nem pássaros, nem mulatas que te melhorem o capítulo António, acordas com o romance, adormeces com o romance* [...]" [(...) there won't be a fishing boat, or birds, or mulattas that will improve the chapter, António; you wake up with the novel, you go to sleep with the novel (...)"] (121).

This enunciation in the novel by Lobo Antunes reveals a kind of transposition or inversion of the roles of creator and created; the fictional entities—their characters, their voices—seem to gain control over the one who has spawned them, becoming autonomous, alive, while, at the same time, the author is given a fictional existence and witnesses his own phantasmagorical birth:

> *trazia terra e folhas, ela a sacudir as folhas da blusa, do cabelo, a mirar-me como se atentasse finalmente em mim,* como se finalmente eu / (sem importância até então) / principiasse a existir, *ela mostrando-me o que não havia da mesma forma que quase não havia Luanda, não havia Angola, não havia África, havia um segundo pássaro gordo a rasgar a farda de um segundo soldado morto* [...]
>
> [(...) *would bring earth and leaves, she would be shaking the leaves off her blouse, her hair, gazing at me as if she had targeted me at last,* as if I / (unimportant until then) / had begun to exist, *her showing me that there was nothing in the same way that there was no Luanda, no Angola, no Africa, there was a second fat bird to tearing the uniform of a second dead soldier* (...)]. (20)

There is a similarly perplexed, and somewhat ironic, questioning regarding the creation of the "scriptable" map of the narrative— "*—Tens o mapa ao contrário*" ["You've got the map backwards"] (372)—whose coordinates seem to belong more to the voices that invade and manipulate it. It is a map that becomes, in turn, an index to the fact that the language of the novel has some of the characteristics of the language of the dream (or the nightmare). We notice how notions of time and space are blurred, characters are duplicated, intertwined, and move in some type of indefinite temporal framework in that time merges, for example, childhood with old age; time retreats into the present and is devoid of the apparent rationality of day-to-day life. These are processes similar to displacement and condensation, and, as in dreamwork, non-contradiction is a fundamental element: "[...] *tudo depressa e devagar, feito da matéria dos sonhos, não estou aqui, nada disto acontece, estou lá dentro a dormir* (...)" ["(...) everything fast and slow, made of the material of the dreams, I am not here, none of this is happening, I am inside there sleeping (...)"] (52).

The ambiguity and strangeness of the dream is enigmatic, misleading, and it is similar to the unfolding of the search for Kurtz, the source of attraction in Conrad's text and, consequently, object of the reader's desire for narrative knowledge; Kurtz, whose function is identical to that of the (constantly shifting) target in Antunes's text, is in permanent movement and out of focus: he is not apprehensible, yet this search for knowledge reveals itself to be a guiding force, one that adds to the progression of the voyage, of narrative

development, and the act of reading:

> He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the same name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream—making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is the very essence of dreams [...]. (Conrad 27)

In this manner, writing plays a decisive role in the knowledge process; whereas writing should have been the light that would have cast out the darkness—the discovery of the target—it is ultimately not able to achieve this because the explorer, like the reader, has only at his disposal a trajectory of signs made of the same linguistic material as those of dreams and from which he can build, in the case of one, a referent (the reality all around them), for the other the reference (that with which the narrative deals).

But that with which the narrative deals, the reference, the place (the rational narrative order) on the map, is displaced, as much in the work of Antunes—"*que difícil este romance, não obedece, não verga*" ["how difficult this novel is, it doesn't obey, doesn't bend"] (120)— and in Conrad's text, because all that in fact happens is the adventure of the map in the process of being constructed in a seemingly irrational and autonomous manner: the invasion by an unknown language (which follows another logic, that of the unconscious) to deceive, derisively, the enterprise of exploring the river, the land and writing: "What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth" (Conrad 5). In fact, Conrad's narrative evokes, already in the first pages—when he contrasts Belgian colonization to the conquest of England by the Romans—this lack of knowledge of man, simultaneously with his timeless strangeness and fascination, when he highlights mankind's own inability to understand mystery and difference:

> Land in a swamp, march through the woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him—all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. There's no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is also detestable. And it has a fascination too, that goes to work upon him. (6)

We could also consider the relation between the writer and the colonial enterprise (a critical theme in the two novels), because, despite the very different motivations behind them, they are connected by the same type of problem: faced by a territory that suggests a cultural void and geographical enigmas, the inscription of writing on the blankness of paper gains the form of a revelation of identity and difference. In effect, this relationship between absence and desire, or between void and imagination, has to do with the very nature of writing. Derrida wrote that desire desires the exteriority of presence and non-presence. In other words, desire is related to the principle of opposition between being and non-being, between lack and a filling up of this lack (167). Writing arises from this ambivalence, and unfolds in the empty space of the page. Thus, being a writer is a very original metaphor for a conqueror, for both conqueror and writer conquer the spaces of consciousness by means of representational structures. However, in the two narratives this space is pursued with the destructuring of representational logic, and the function of writing seems to be to capture a sense of the ever-changing mystery, the inconceivable, the unrepresentable (the unknown, the nightmare, the horror), and the unspeakable:

> *E recomeçar a correr na direcção do Bengo ou de uma paragem na parada do Alto de São João em que o empregado / —Seabrinha / me exibia um balde de água suja onde se reflectia, em mil pedaços, a minha cara estilhaçada.*
>
> [And start to run again in the direction of Bengo or a stopover at the *Alto de São João* where the employee / "Seabrinha" / showed me a pail of dirty water where I saw reflected, in a thousand pieces, my shattered face.] (110)

Thus we see that the texts by Lobo Antunes and Conrad pursue, in their own way, a practice, not necessarily of occupation per se, but a *practice* that questions the occupation/writing process, and also the oppressive power of the representation of the colonial enterprise; functioning as far more than a mere rhetorical figure, the allegory of the map/narrative demonstrates that, in fact, in these two novels writing and the historical moment are never divorced from each other.

The reader wants to know the outcome of the narrative, just as Marlow desires to know Kurtz, and just as Seabra, Miguéis, Morais, etc. want to know the target. The diamonds of Lunda Norte or the ivory of the Congo are made

emblematic by voices throughout three chapters in *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo*, in a latent disfiguration of the colonial disaster (Lobo Antunes) and as a figurative representation of the impossibility of cultural/territorial occupation (Conrad), and they are narrated between two spaces (Lisbon/Angola; London/Congo).

Still, this desire is frustrated "*na falta de um mapa que não soube decifrar e no centro do qual*" ["by the absence of a map that he did not know how to decode and in the centre of which"] (179) the readers will never get to obtain the truth as they would want. There are multiple versions of Kurtz; there are multiple narratives of the colonial experience by the characters in the novel by Lobo Antunes. Just as it is impossible to know what really happened in Angola, except through a phantom-like memory—"*Não sei se ela disse /—Esta era a casa / ou / (se calhar) / —Há vinte anos atrás / ou / (pode ser não estou certo) / —Morei aqui*" ["I don't know if she said / "—This was the house" / or / (perhaps) / "—Twenty years ago" / or / (maybe I'm wrong) / "—I lived here"] (19)—because it exists as the inheritance of a collective disaster, at the same time that it is the universe of several generations of individual phantoms, as a type of "black hole" (and the metaphor seems apt to designate a memory that has become darkened), or, in the language of psychoanalysis, a "troumatisme" (Jorge 142):[1] "*porque África é isto, é só isto, destroços e torresmos e minas*" ["because that's what Africa is, that's all it is, wrecks, greaves and mines"] (183). It is equally impossible to attain the dark truth of Kurtz, the undecipherable stuff of a nightmare, situated in the heart of the narrative, a place which could stand in place of the darkness of a real that cannot be named.

Animalization, Dirt, Misery, Abjection

As David Spurr argues in *The Rhetoric of Empire* (a work from which we have borrowed many of the analytic tools in this essay) the discourse of colonialism typical of the classical colonial situation remains subtly residual in those practices brought on by the forces of Western cultural hegemony over the post-colonial world. Post-colonial is here used in two senses: the historical situation marked by the dismantling of the institutions of the colonial power; the revision of that past and the consequent crises of representation and identity of both sides. The relationships between the former-colonized and the former-colonizer have not remained the same, but neither have they disappeared altogether (Loomba). It is this instability which is analyzed here, and we haven taken as bridges between *Heart of Darkness* and *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo*, insofar as both offer a

critical and moral reflection on the nature of (post-) colonialism.

> Edward Said argues with regards to *Heart of Darkness* that the narrative is adapted to the present-day vision of the post-colonial word: Westerns may have physically left their old colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as markets but as locales on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually. [...] The assertions of this discourse exclude what has been represented as "lost" by arguing that the colonial world was in some ways ontologically speaking lost to begin with, irredeemable, irrecusably inferior. (25)

In the novel by António Lobo Antunes, on the other hand, the voices of the different characters—through the inheritance, we could say, of a collective traumatic memory—speak and reveal diverse types of degrading images typical of colonial discourse, some of which are present in *Heart of Darkness*, and which coexist, phantom-like, residually, in post-colonial discourse.

If racism and the (transgressive) erotic appeal of the Other, physical violence, (colonial and civil) wars and neo-imperialism are some of the more obvious themes in the novel by Antunes, many others are exemplified in the speech of the characters, this aberrant vision of the Western world over the post-colonial map: "[...] *o capim quieto, África não pessoas, capim, queimadas de capim, os túmulos dos colonos com as suas cruzes de madeira e as suas datas a navalha / (não nomes, iniciais e datas)"* [(...) the quiet grass, Africa not people, grass, forest fires of grass, the graves of settlers with their wooden crosses and the dates carved with a penknife / (not names, initials and dates)"] (360).

The discourse of colonialism of which we spoke designates a space of language with different rhetorical functions that are bound to a particular historical moment (Spurr). In effect, this discourse represents a European imagination that undervalues the African cultural world when it imposes the (European) notions of civilization and reason in opposition to savagery and madness (of the Other), and when it produces a series of images that revolve around the notion of abjection: "He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is also detestable. And it has a fascination too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of abomination—you know" (Conrad 6).

This constellation of images, figuratively represented around misery, animality, dirt, and in sum, abjection, is seen as the result of a primitive condition, because the physical suffering of the indigenous people is associated with its intellectual and moral degradation. As Julia Kristeva explains, "the abject

shares only one quality with the object—that of being opposed to [...] the abject, as fallen object, is what is radically excluded, drawing me towards the point where meaning collapses" (126). Or, as we witness in the novel by Lobo Antunes:

> [...] *a conspirarem nos musseques, chegavam nos vagões de gado disfarçados de carregadores, agulheiros, serventes, víamo-los sumirem-se das sanzalas à tarde / ratos / surgirem nas bancas do mercado / ratos / juntarem-se, separarem-se, conversarem entre si em kimbundu / ratos*
>
> [(...) plotting and conspiring in their township, cattle trucks would arrive disguised as porters, signalmen, servants, we'd see them disappear from the plantations in the afternoon / rats / to reappear in the market stall / rats / meeting up with each other, separating from each other, talking to each other in Kimbundu / rats]. (69)

Disease, hunger, superstition, barbaric customs, are all identified as original marks of pre-colonial chaos, and for that reason the constant reproduction of these images justifies colonial intervention; they are also signs of the specific difference between colonizer and colonized.

> *o Seabra que não só não se habituava a África como não alcançava o que África era, movia-se no meio de destroços e troncos cuidando que troncos e destroços somente, este calor, esta febre, estes animais estranhos, esta violência sem razão (...).*
>
> [Seabra not only wouldn't get used to Africa, he couldn't make out what Africa was; he moved in amongst the wrecks and trunks and for him they were only wrecks and trunks, this heat, this fever, these strange animals, this senseless violence (...)]. (118)

The cultural debasement of the colonized also implies a prohibition imposed against which to shore up Western cultural values by force of destructive desire. The principles of exclusion, of the frontier and difference, that are summoned up by colonial discourse are related to this fear that the colonizers will lose themselves in "darkness" and go native: "[...] *a minha mãe em busca da esfregona limpando África do soalho / —Que lixeira*" ["(...) my mother in search of the mop to clear Africa off the floor / —What a trash-heap"] (178).

Identity, Contamination, Sickness

The idea of contamination is related to the idea of going native and, paradoxically, the inverse which is desired, the Westernization of the native, is revealed by colonial discourse to be something ridiculous and strange, artificial, a parody, or even grotesque: "*[C]onsoante tanto me faz que se matem, que morram, os brancos que vivem com eles pretos também, uma terra de pretos, uma terra suja de pretos que não me interessa onde fica* [...]" ["I don't really care if they kill each other, if they die, or even about the whites who live in their midst, a land of black, a land that's dirty with blacks, I don't really care where it is (...)"] (184).

This anxiety of maintaining boundaries is associated with the idea of preserving an identity and, on the other hand, with the fear of transgression associated with the idea of alienation, disease, contamination, "darkening," pathology and madness. The fear of contamination that begins at the biological frontier anxiously expands and progresses, both metaphorically and metonymically, with the fears of going native.

Time, Voice, Language

Colonial discourse denies cultural history as well as the memory of the space, and it highlights the absence of writing, of a past. In the landscape there are no signs of an ancient architecture, of monuments; there is nothing that will reveal the presence of a transformative process at work. The absence of this inscription of monuments is the sign of another flaw, the register of the difference between nature and culture, between present and past:

> *Claro que conhecíamos o facto de o alvo ter sido uma cantina do Dondo, afastada da cidade, mas em África chamam cidade a três palhotas desfeitas, chamam cidade a tudo, basta haver uma picada, meia dúzia de cabras com um milhafre em cima, um indígena de pano à cintura a morrer de fome, e pronto, cidade senhor, uma cidadezinha, conhecíamos o facto de ter sido uma cantina ou seja uma lojeca de vender misérias a pessoas mais miseráveis que ele, comida que os porcos recusariam, mantas de pataco e o alvo, apesar de branco, um cafre como os outros nessa época, descalço ao balcão* [...]. (65)

> [Of course we knew that the target was a country store in Dondo, somewhat removed from the city, but in Africa they call three huts falling apart a city, they call everything a city, all you need is a stretch of land, half a dozen goats with a

hawk overhead, a native with a piece of cloth at his waist dying of hunger, and pronto, gentlemen, a city, a little city; we knew that all it was, was a store, or rather a makeshift store selling miserable things to people who were even more miserable people than him, food that pigs would refuse, cheap blankets and a target, even though he was white, a kaffir (nigger) like the others, standing barefoot behind the counter (...).]

On the other hand, when we compare the discourse of colonialism to that of post-colonialism, we see the return of the idea of barbarism, of the confusing blurring of space, the emptiness of the map to be filled in, and also the manifestation of a certain imperial nostalgia in the face of the inability of these new countries to peacefully regulate themselves. The prejudices implicit in this imperial nostalgia of the beginning of the twenty-first century approach the notion of horror described by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* in the early years of the twentieth century.

In other words, if Conrad's text is a critical exposition of the colonial process in its heyday, we also see, through the perspective of some of the narrative voices in *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo* that the termination of the colonial process, with the advent of independence and the subsequent years, culminates with the return of images, which are once again dark, and revealing of this progressive loss of control over nature and of horror:

—Descansem que ele volta porque não existe Angola / existe a poeira vermelha, crianças de muletas, as ruínas dos prédios onde passeiam os cegos, uma primeira rajada de martelos cravando pregos no escuro, mais pregos de uma segunda rajada nas paredes, nos canteiros [...]. (129)

["Rest assured he'll come back because Angola doesn't exist / all that exists is the red dust, children on crutches, ruins of the buildings where blind men stroll, the first blast of the hammers hitting nails into the dark, more nails still from a second blast on the walls, in a first burst of hammers nailing nails in the darkness, more nails of a second blast in the walls, in the flower beds (...)."]

Another of the parameters by which colonized peoples are culturally disqualified by Western thought is the nature of language and the absence of a discourse that is their own; according to this point of view, linguistic devaluation corresponds to degradation and social backwardness. Incoherence, inar-

ticulateness, the scream, onomatopoeia, muteness and silence stand as metaphors for this absence of speech:

> *não palavras, guinchos de rato, as unhas não iguais às nossas, o cor de rosa dos pretos, o focinho que me busca o pescoço, não é Luanda a pouco e pouco na água, são os ratos senhores* [...].
>
> [not words, the shrieks of rats, even their nails aren't the same as ours, the pink of blacks, the snout that seeks out my neck, it's not Luanda, little by little sinking into the water, these are the master rats (...).] (Antunes 196)
>
> A complaining clamour, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears … It culminated in a hurried outbreak of almost intolerably excessive shrieking which stopped short, leaving us stiffened in appalling and excessive silence. "God God! What is the meaning"? (Conrad 40)

The filling in of colonial maps allows for things to be named, which is necessary, because the terror of the void, of the unnameable, produces a confrontation with the abyss, with the absence of representation, with death, with the fear of nothingness. Viewed from this perspective, Conrad's text is exemplary in that it demonstrates that it is not possible to name difference. The text by Lobo Antunes, on the other hand, is revealing—through residual and timeless voices—of how repressed negativity surfaces on to the void of the page, and with it comes all brutality of horror, of the unknown, all revealing of how Western imagination and its means of communication assess Africa.

Before, later and now, they all join in the loss of identity of those implicated in this, of those who have returned, of those who start this trip anew—the imperial voyage—in an incurable contamination which allows us to read Marlow's adventure in post-colonial terms in *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo*:

> *um mapa num nome de cargueiro cujas letras desciam ao comprido do casco, uma criança a escutar mabecos a seguir à igreja para os lados do Beato*
>
> [a map in the name of a cargo ship whose letters descended all the way down the hull, a child listening to wild dogs proceeding to the church on the Beato side]. (181)

Note

[1] "Lacan, em seu seminário RSI, insistiu sobre o facto de que aquilo que Freud introduziu como sendo o recalque originário tem a estrutura mesma do furo, daí ele ter falado do trauma como *troumatisme*, neologismo criado por ele, que associa o trauma ao próprio furo, *trou*." ["In his RSI seminar, Lacan insisted on the fact that what Freud called primary repression has the same structure as a hole, and it is for that reason that he speaks of trauma as *troumatisme*, a neologism which he invented himself, and which associated trauma with the hole (*trou*) itself"] (Jorge 142).

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A Supplement to the White Man's Burden: Lobo Antunes, History, the Colonial Wars, and the April Revolution

Luís Madureira

Abstract: This essay opens with an examination of Portuguese novels about the colonial wars which seek to expose the referential emptiness of the Salazarist imperial mystique, and present its "civilizing mission" as an example of the very un-Historicity which Hegel notoriously ascribes to Africa. Such texts arguably employ "postcolonial" strategies of reading empire. It is precisely this gesture that Lobo Antunes refuses to perform. His fiction suggests that to try to link the protagonist's colonial story with Angola's narrative of resistance would only confirm his complicity with the colonial project. By the same token, the April Revolution appears bereft of historical meaning, reduced to one in an infinite chain of exchangeable signifiers mobilized to name a desire for totality that cannot but fall short of its object. In Antunes's fiction, Portugal's quest for universality seems as illusory as the *estadonovista* yearning for the resurgence of an etiolated imperial glory.

In an early chapter of Günter Grass's *Tin Drum*, Oskar Matzerath, the novel's narrator, expresses a characteristically neurotic desire: "I wish I could be a toasty warm brick, constantly exchanged for myself, lying beneath my grandmother's skirts" (147). To repeat the question Oskar attributes to his implied reader: "What [...] can Oskar be after beneath his grandmother's skirts? Oblivion, a home, the ultimate Nirvana?" Oskar's answer is as pointed as it is star-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 227-46.
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tling: "Afrika suchte ich unter den Röcken" [("I was looking for Africa under the skirts") (*Tin Drum* 125)] (*Blechtrommel* 147):

> This was the watershed, he continues, the union of all streams; here special winds blew, or else there was no wind at all; dry and warm, you could listen to the whistling of the rain; here ships made fast or weighed anchors [...] beneath my grandmother's skirts it was always summer [...]. Nowhere could I have been more at peace with the calendar than beneath my grandmother's skirts. (126)

Oskar may be paraphrasing here a Baudelairean wish to be here [*da*], there [*là-bas*], and nowhere—or anywhere out of this world [*n'importe où hors du monde*]. Like Baudelaire's oneirical land, the place beneath the grandmother's skirts is a paradoxical true fiction ("un vrai pays de Cocagne"), the uncharted harbor where numinous ships come to slumber at the end of parabolic journeys to Infinity, "un de ces pays qui sont les analogies de la Mort" ["one of those countries that are the analogies of Death"]; a place at once exotic and familiar: *l'Orient de l'Occident, la Chine de l'Europe* (Baudelaire 107, 179). It is an uncanny topos that turns out to be the common "entrance to the former *Heim* [home] of all human beings, to the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and 'in the beginning'" (Freud, "Uncanny" 146). As Oskar later confesses, his "aim is to get back to the umbilical cord; that is the sole purpose behind this whole vast verbal effort" (179). About the "Uncanny" (or *unheimlich*) Freud has famously argued that the prefix *un* serves as "the token of repression," of something familiar (or *heimlich*) which has been repressed.

For instance, "whenever a man dreams of a place or country and says to himself, while he is still dreaming, 'this place is familiar to me, I've been here before,' we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body" ("Uncanny" 146). The Uncanny, then, "occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed" (150). Ironically, inasmuch as Oskar's "uncanny" life story is defined by a willed resurgence of childhood traumas, of the revenants of a primitive ancestry, as it were, it parallels the very politico-historical itinerary from which he so obstinately seeks to distance himself.

Oskar's drive to replicate the undifferentiated and ceramic recurrence of the Same shares in common with the Nazi project its barbaric gloss of the distinctively modern desire to obliterate the old order. In both instances, the

new departure turns out to be a return, and the point of origin is so radically original that it dwells outside of historical (or calendar) time altogether. It lies beyond the "origin" itself. Oskar's desire to reach the primal stasis of a perennially embryonic mode of being can thus be said to relate to the modern as Freud's "compulsion to repeat" does to the pleasure principle: it is "something that seems more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual, and which ends up overriding [the latter]" (*Pleasure Principle* 25). Insofar as it is an "unconscious mental process," it is unaffected by time. Indeed, the idea of time is completely alien to it. Oskar's instinct to restore an earlier state of things is, in this psychoanalytical sense, "the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life [...] of the *conservative* nature of living substance" (*Pleasure Principle* 43).

And this "initial state from which the living entity has at one time or another departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads" is of course death: a return to an inorganic existence immanent in the organism itself, the embodiment of its wish "to die only in its own fashion"[1] (*Pleasure Principle* 45, 47). In this sense, Oskar's *Afrika* becomes not only an analogy of death, but the figure for a wholesale civilizational collapse, for a cultural disposition "to give a deceptive appearance of being [a] force tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact [it] is merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new" (*Pleasure Principle* 45). If one assumes, as one of *Tin Drum*'s possible tropological frameworks, Freud's assertion of the striking similarity between "the process of civilization and the libidinal development of the individual" (*Civilization* 51), then Oskar's obsessive desire to return to the uterine tropics suggests that the titanic battle between Eros and Thanatos, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction to which the evolution of civilization may be reduced according to Freud (*Civilization* 82), culminates with the absolute victory of the latter—with a retrocession into a primitive state in which "man" knows no restrictions to his savage instincts.

It is as though the absolute "end of History," which Europe signifies for Hegel (*History* 103), the principle of "self-conscious Reason" which defines the occident's epistemological impetus "to take back into itself, into its unitary nature" (*Mind* 45), the recalcitrant and protean alterity of the world confronting it; as though the "development and realization of freedom" which European civilization putatively embodies were to retrogress not just to the beginning of History, but to its "threshold," the Unhistorical and Undeveloped netherworld to which Hegel consigns Africa in *The Philosophy of History*. It is as though, in intimating that "the nation lives the same kind of life as

the individual," Grass wishes simultaneously to underscore a crucial "Hegelian" distinction between these two processes. In the case of the nation, "death appears to imply destruction by its own agency" (*History* 75).

This is the peculiar eschatology that appears to govern the plots of several recent (or "post-revolutionary") novels about Portugal's African wars. Hence, although in a very broad sense these narratives may certainly be classified as twentieth-century "adaptations" of Joseph Conrad's great Africanist novella, they nonetheless purportedly succeed in transcending what the late Edward Said has called its tragic limitation, that is, the fact that "even though [Conrad] could see clearly that on one level imperialism was essentially pure dominance and land-grabbing, he could not then conclude that imperialism had to end so that the 'natives' could lead lives free from European domination" (30). By contrast, it is precisely this recognition that lays the epistemological ground for Portugal's latter-day novelistic journeys into a stereotypical "heart of darkness." In this light, the renowned cartographic blank upon which little Marlow's desire is inscribed ("when I grow up I will go there" [33]) turns out to be disquietingly self-reflexive. Like the hankering of the perennially and "willfully" diminutive Oskar for a matricial *Afrika*, Marlow's wish to "go there" is in the last instance a death wish, a desire to destroy, "in [his] own fashion" (*Pleasure Principle* 47), the culture and civilization that ultimately enable him to define himself as a human subject. By dint of an impossible return "to the earliest beginnings of the earth," to "a prehistoric earth" (Conrad 59, 62)—to the threshold of History in the Hegelian sense—both the young Marlow and Oskar strive to follow in reverse order the developmental itinerary that the West's particularist and fabular "universal history" has charted.

The Nazi project reproduces at the national level this *viaje a la semilla*, as Alejo Carpentier would call it, this return voyage to the infant stage. It initiates the backward movement across history's great epochs that, rather than culminating in the German spirit's "blissful self-rediscovery," as Nietzsche once exuberantly foretold (96), leads, in the words of the narrator-protagonist of Carpentier's *Lost Steps*, to the brutal interruption of the West's emancipatory narrative,[2] to an absolute modernity which is at the same time a kind of civilizational death fugue: "What was new here, unprecedented [*inédito*], modern, was that cavern of horrors, that ministry of horror [...] in which everything bore witness to torture, mass extermination, crematories" (Carpentier 94). Similarly, the "anticolonial" appropriations of Hegel's master/slave dialectic, exemplified in the writings of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and C. L. R. James,

among many others, suggest that the "master race," in dehumanizing those with "a different complexion or slightly flatter noses," ultimately dehumanizes itself. As the template to Nazism's genocidal procedures, colonialism, Césaire asserts in his *Discours sur le colonialisme*, becomes *la négation pure et simple de la civilisation*. As a consequence, the "white world" reveals itself "horribly weary from its immense efforts / its stiff joints [cracking] under the hard stars" (69).

From the early twentieth century onward, "anti-colonial" literatures endeavor variously to rewrite this imputed civilizational death-instinct as the opening—the *blank space*, as it were—upon which, in Gayatri Spivak's terms, "a new magisterium [may] construct itself [from the West's "magisterial texts"] in the name of the Other" (*Critique* 7). It is putatively this wholesale collapse of European civilization, and its attendant notions of progress, enlightenment, and reason that Conrad's novella foreshadows as well. Only in this rather restricted sense would I be willing to go along with Alfred J. López's provocative claim that Conrad's novella produces "an opening into the postcolonial" (59). Grounding his own reading of *Heart of Darkness* on Guyana's Wilson Harris's designation of the text as a "frontier" novel, López argues that Conrad's narrative clears the space in which postcolonial literature was later to emerge. For López, then, the novel betokens "a capacity, in the most general terms, for language—or more specifically, for a discourse with the [...] capability of representing *difference*" (46).

It is a similar "tampering" with the authority of "Europe's long story" that Spivak identifies as one of the specifically postcolonial strategies of engaging with the West's powerful and enduring narrative (*Teaching* 75). It seems to be in this disruptive spirit as well that the Portuguese critic Eduardo Lourenço, writing in the throes of the precipitate decolonization unleashed in the aftermath of Portugal's 1974 revolution, reduces to *nothing* the impact on the national *psyche* of the vertiginous collapse of a 500-year old colonial empire: "Mas marcas duradouras na alma de quem 'teve' quinhentos anos de império *nada*, ou só a ficção encarecente que n'*Os Lusíadas* ecoa, não como mudadora da sua alma, mas como simples *nomenclatura* extasiada de terras e lugares que na verdade, salvo Goa, nunca habitámos como senhores delas" (*Labirinto* 43).[3]

More recently, Lourenço has spoken of Portugal's "puro império de sonho," describing its late nineteenth-century colonial enterprise in Africa as "a nossa fuga simbólica para o imaginário imperial" (*Mitologia* 130). Recent metropolitan narratives about Portugal's colonial wars seek consciously (at times even programmatically) to elaborate as a discursive "capacity" the link with the

postcolonial that both López and Harris regard as a potentiality in Conrad's narrative discourse, and which Edward Said considers absent from it.[4] They therefore attempt to recode what Eduardo Lourenço defines as a historiographic *nothing* as a metropolitan version of the very negation of History that Hegel notoriously imputes to Africa. Death in these war novels emerges as the unconscious wish not only of the colonial subject but of the metropolis itself. The backwardness or marginality that, in the eyes of several of the leaders of Africa's liberation struggles, belied even the pretense of a Portuguese "civilizing mission" would thus appear to be confirmed by this contemporary recurrence of an ostensible desire for the end of empire, a death-drive which, as I argue elsewhere, can already be glimpsed in the interstices of Portugal's sixteenth-century discourses of maritime expansion.[5]

In António Lobo Antunes's *As naus*,[6] just as in Manuel Alegre's *Jornada de África* (1989) and João de Melo's *Autópsia de um mar em ruínas* (1984), this putative death-wish functions explicitly as the synecdoche of metropolitan disintegration. In Alegre's *Jornada*, this link is established with a sustained set of allusions to the conveniently metonymic death of King Sebastian I. As Alegre asserts in a poem written at least a decade before *Jornada* was published,

> Alcácer Quibir foi sempre o passado por dentro do presente
> [...]
> Quinhentos anos dentro destes anos
> Alcácer Quibir [é] este fantasma sobre a nossa idade
> [...]
> [É] ir morrer além do mar por coisa nenhuma
> [...]
> um tempo parado no tempo [...]
> Porque um fantasma é rei de Portugal. (n.p.)

Similarly, in António Lobo Antunes's *As naus*, the ghost of King Sebastian haunts the entire narrative, as does the attendant threat of a Castilian invasion, of the country's untimely yet foretold death. At the end of the novel, in an obsessive-compulsive reenactment of the closing section of Pessoa's *Mensagem*, the returnees from a collapsing empire, ravaged by mental illness and tropical diseases, gather (like "a band of robed seagulls" ["um bando de gaivotas em roupão" (247)]) on the beach at Ericeira. Their aim is to prepare for the arrival of the Fifth Empire's ghostly harbinger: "o rei maricas" (241), "um ado-

lescente loiro, de coroa na cabeça e beiços amuados, vindo de Alcácer Quibir com pulseiras de cobre trabalhado dos ciganos de Carcavelos e colares baratos de Tânger ao pescoço" (247). Like King Sebastian, and indeed the *estadonovista* imperial mystique, these "dying colonialists" apparently suffer from the quixotic affliction as defined by Foucault. Their delusional efforts to decipher in Renaissance discourses of expansion a redemptive resemblance to Portugal's present-day imperialism, their stubborn insistence to read those ancient chronicles and its "rotting" twentieth-century avatar as belonging to the same hallowed text, verge also "upon the visionary or madness" (Foucault 47).

Ultimately, Salazarist colonial discourses also "have [no] value apart from the slender fiction which they represent" (Foucault 48). They are, in this way (and to borrow Eduardo Lourenço's sardonic definition of the Portuguese), "more Quixotic than Don Quixote" (*Mitologia* 14). At the end of *As naus*, the only thing the lugubrious group of ex-colonials is able to descry is expectedly "the ocean, empty as far as the line of the horizon." They remain nonetheless the willing prisoners of a kind of imperial sublime, "aguardando, ao som de uma flauta que as vísceras do mar emudeciam, os relinchos de um cavalo impossível" (247), performing the tenuous hope, already inscribed in the *Lusíadas*' invocation, that the willful young king would restore the decaying sixteenth-century empire to its former resplendent glory. In this restricted sense, Antunes's narrative fits Adorno's description of contemporary novels as "negative epics [:] testimonials to a state of affairs in which the individual liquidates himself" (35).

In Melo's *Autópsia de um mar em ruínas*, the fascist desire to restore the grandeur of Portugal's sixteenth-century empire is gradually refigured as a repetition-compulsion, a collective drive to return to a historical "womb" whose culmination is unavoidably death: "cada um procurava a segurança [...] um ninho onde esse corpo à beira da fragmentação pudesse ter ainda a ilusão de regressar ao óvulo e ao seio da mãe" (13), "e eis a morte [...]. O ar tornou[-se] gordo como a placenta onde fui gerado," "vai morrer um homem. Vai morrer um país que matou um milhão e quinhentos mil homens na guerra" (292, 293). Yet both *Jornada* and *Autópsia* seek to move considerably beyond the mere chronicling of an imperial death foretold. They apparently subscribe to the compensatory political posture which, according to Lourenço, Portugal adopts in response to a traumatizing decolonization: "o que perdíamos em espaço e em riqueza potencial (e real) era compensado pela *exemplaridade revolucionária*, ou sobretudo, por uma exemplaridade *democrática* que tinha

o condão de nos subtrair do lote das nações retrógradas politicamente e nos conciliar a benevolência e estima do universo" (*Labirinto* 49).

As Lourenço has proposed more recently, "read in reverse" (*lido às avessas*) the "disaster" that the dissolution of the Portuguese colonial empire constituted "se converteu no acto fundador da Nova Democracia portuguesa" (*Mitologia* 139). Along similar lines, Alegre and Melo attempt to adumbrate what Paul Gilroy designates "the inversion of the relationship between margin and centre as it has appeared within the master discourses of the master race" (45) a reversal, which as C. L. R. James asserts, is embodied in the peculiar circumstances surrounding the collapse of Portugal's colonial empire:

> Portugal which dominated areas of Africa for 500 years has not only lost control over them; but the revolutionary developments in Africa have affected the future of Portugal itself. In other words, the movement is in the opposite direction—instead of movements from Europe stimulating revolutionary developments in Africa, liberation struggles in Africa have unleashed movements of tremendous importance in Europe itself. (378)

It is this remarkable alteration of the trajectory which Hegel imposes on universal history that Melo's and Alegre's novels attempt to register. As in Césaire's "Notebook of a Return to My Native Land," the death of the metropolis prefigures the "birth" of a new humanity in Africa: "cabeças de homens brancos caem degoladas por cada golpe; seus pescoços antecipadamente condenados pelo dia grande que vai chegar ainda" (Melo 123).

In Lobo Antunes's *Os cus de Judas* (1979), the narrator-protagonist foresees the impending demise of his European homeland exactly in the ritual dances of "um povo cuja inesgotável vitalidade [ele] entrevira já, anos antes, no trompete solar de Louis Armstrong, expulsando a neurastenia e o azedume com a alegria musculosa do seu canto" (58), in the inflections of a "esquisita linguagem que eu entendia mal, mas se aparentava ao saxofone de Charlie Parker quando não grita o seu ódio ferido pelo mundo cruel e ridículo dos brancos" (181).[7] This glimpse of a world which the narrator of *Os cus* places under the sign of authenticity not only glosses Langston Hughes's "Trumpet Player," but it repeats a cultural opposition pervasive in *négritude* poetry.[8] Here, too, the vibrancy and vitality of the African world reflects back to the European narrator the inauthenticity and morbidity of his own culture: "sentia-me melancolicamente herdeiro de um velho país desajeitado e agoni-

zante, de uma Europa repleta de furúnculos de palácios de pedras de bexiga de catedrais" (58).

By the same token, the chapters from Melo's novel that focus on Angola's anti-colonial resistance adhere to Sartre's postulate regarding the universality of any individual (existential) project: "Every project, even that of a Chinese, an Indian or a Negro, can be understood by a European [who] can redo in himself the project of the Chinese, the Indian or the African [...] as long as [s/he] has sufficient information [*renseignements suffisants*]" (69-70). Falling prey perhaps to the "Eurocentric arrogance" that Spivak ascribes to Sartre's assertion (*Critique* 173), Melo attempts to incorporate, as a counterpoint to his own account of a metropolitan death, the Angolans' project of liberation, the latter's subterranean (and subcutaneous) narration of a nation yet to be born: "a história da libertação [...] escrita com sangue na memória do povo" (305), "essas histórias que ficavam escritas na terra-mãe [das quais] a pátria se fazia no tempo"(119). Melo's *Autópsia* seeks not only to undermine dominant Portuguese colonial discourses but to reproduce, or at least gesture toward, Angola's incipient nationalist project.

In his effort to establish a causal link between the death of the metropolis and the birth of a new Angolan nation, to interject an emergent "counternarration" into the fabric of his own narrative of imperial decadence, Melo thus exhibits that "revolutionary exemplariness" which Eduardo Lourenço ironically brands as a compensation for the empire's loss—an exemplariness that in a sense supplements "the white man's burden." What distinguishes this supplementary mediation from the one Derrida describes is not just its "self-consciousness" but its expressed desire to take the place of the very term—colonialism—it defers. This is precisely the exemplary gesture which Lobo Antunes's narrative refuses to perform. Other than the phantasmal guerrillas, the central figure of resistance in *Os cus de Judas* is the narrator's African lover Sofia, an MPLA operative who is gang-raped and subsequently murdered by a PIDE station chief: "mulher liberta que nenhum pide, nenhum tropa, nenhum cipaio calaria" (187).

The narrator's involvement with her is in fact the one facet of his Angolan experience that he deliberately conceals from his interlocutor. He invokes Sofia's image, her "triumphant laughter" ["gargalhada vitoriosa"], but nevertheless refuses to transcribe her words, turning instead to his own pusillanimous silence before her extra-judicial execution: "saio deste aquário de azulejos como saí do quartel da pide [...] sem a coragem de um grito de indignação ou revolta, a acabar de cumprir esta noite como outrora cumpri, sem protestar,

vinte e sete meses de escravidão sangrenta" (192-3). The narrator's refusal to tell Sofia's story, his insistence on guarding her secret, stands in direct contrast to the PIDE agent's brutal tactics of interrogation. It stops short of reproducing what Spivak calls "the ethnocentric and reverse-ethnocentric double-bind" (that is, converting the native into the object of an "enthusiastic information-retrieval") (*Critique* 118). In this way, Sofia marks the site of an irretrievable alterity, of the novel's inaccessible exterior. She represents a diegetic limit beyond which Antunes's narration cannot proceed without reproducing the very violence and terror which it sets out to displace.

The silent acquiescence of Antunes' narrator to Sofia's torture and assassination, as well as his resigned collaboration with the *Estado Novo*'s counter-insurgent campaign inevitably render him complicit with the colonial project he abhors. Any endeavor to incorporate the subterranean idiom of resistance (the struggle for which Sofia sacrifices herself) into his own (metropolitan) account of the colonial war would only exacerbate this complicity. It would, in effect, inscribe itself in the history of "the arrogance of the radical European humanist conscience, which will consolidate itself by imagining the other … through the collection of information" (Spivak, *Critique* 171). In this way, *Os cus de Judas* sets itself apart both from Melo's *Autópsia* and Alegre's *Jornada*, which, in a broad sense, both endeavor to exhume a subterranean similitude between the colonial troops and the nationalist guerrillas. Rather than signal the double emancipation putatively unleashed by the abrupt fall of the colonial empire, Antunes's narrative of the colonial war annuls the utopian promise of April '74. The remarkable public silence that greets the empire's collapse in *Os cus de Judas*, the "unparalleled" absence of even a vestigial traumatic sign on the "national psyche," the collective refusal to rethink "*[n]a sua totalidade [a] nossa imagem perante nós mesmos e no espelho do mundo*" (Lourenço, *Labirinto* 45; italics in the original), marks the ineluctable closure of the revolutionary cycle. "Se a revolução acabou, e em certo sentido acabou de facto, é porque os mortos de África, de boca cheia de terra, não podem protestar, e hora a hora a direita os vai matando, de novo, e nós, os sobreviventes, continuamos duvidosos de estar vivos" (Antunes, *Cus* 73).

Not only is the radical temporal rift which divides the metropolis from its colonial "dependencies" during the armed struggle not transcended by the April revolution, but, as Antunes's later fiction suggests, Portugal's historical "stagnation" appears only to intensify in the post-revolutionary period. The inversion in the motion of History, which C. L. R. James views as inextricably

linked to "liberation struggles in Africa," manifests itself in the metropolis as a lingering "backwardness," as an effective reversal of the stereotyped hierarchical relationship between Europe and the "dark continent." Small wonder, therefore, that in Antunes's sixth novel, *Auto dos danados*, the third in a quartet whose last installment is *As naus*, a back-packing German couple, who "invade" a curio shop in the southern Portuguese province of Alentejo in the wake of the revolution, examine "as loiças e as peles, como os navegadores antigos as estatuetas de pau-santo dos pretos," insisting on regarding even the most trivial act as some "ritual primitivo, executado em sua honra por um membro da tribo" (250, 251). In a general sense, the scene epitomizes the contradictory position Portugal occupies in relation to the "developed" world at the moment of decolonization. In the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos:

> Portugal was the center in relation to its colonies and the periphery in relation to [post-industrial Europe]. In less technical terms, we can say that for a long time Portugal was simultaneously a colonizing and a colonized country. On April 25 1974, Portugal was the least developed country in Europe and at the same time the sole possessor of the largest and longest-lasting European colonial empire. (105)

In *Fado alexandrino* (1983), perhaps Antunes's most full-fledged attempt to novelize the historical articulation between the disintegration of the colonial empire and the April revolution, the "unthinkable" desire to convert Portugal into a European Cuba (Lourenço, *Labirinto* 50) appears ultimately to produce a (historically) *necessary* displacement of the former metropolis into the margins of world history. The historical vacuum purportedly defining Portugal's anachronistic imperialism is "superceded" in *Fado* by a post-colonial collapse of the historical which, on the face of it, recalls the slippage of History into parodic repetition undergirding Marx's famous account of France's 1848 Revolution (*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*). The absence of historicity that was Portugal under fascism now comes to determine, indeed "overdetermine" its revolutionary phase. The novel, which relates the gathering of five veterans of the Mozambican front in a Lisbon restaurant to commemorate the tenth anniversary of their battalion's return to the metropole in 1973, suggests that the April Revolution is as original as the title's *fado alexandrino*. It resembles a melodramatic national (and nationalist) ballad corseted into the narrative

counterpart of the twelve-syllable neo-classical verse revived by French and Portuguese Romanticists alike. *Fado alexandrino* is therefore neatly divided into three parts of *twelve* chapters each.

In such a context, the Revolution becomes but the latest *fado* that the deluded nation croons to itself, the most recent wish-fantasy to replace the fascist imperial mystique. Or, borrowing Eduardo Lourenço's terms, April 25, 1974 signals the hasty reinvention of a "new mythology" (*Mitologia* 147). It marks a political instance of the Uncanny, an apparent revival and confirmation of repressed infantile complexes and primitive beliefs: "voltamos, quase sem transição, senão aos 'antigos tempos,' aos mesmos caseiros e deliciosos negócios públicos, instituídos pouco a pouco como uma festa permanente" (*Mitologia* 147). In accordance with this structure of repetition, the *Estado Novo*'s "construção mítica da imagem de um *Portugal-menino-jesus-das-nações* [...] 'eón' histórico predestinado à *regeneração espiritual do universo*" (Lourenço, *Labirinto* 39) would be at once supplanted and repeated in the "imagem de um *Portugal revolucionário*, exemplo inicial e iniciático de uma subversão democrática da ordem capitalista europeia, [que fazia] confluir para um povo sem espaço para um tal sonho os fantasmas da esquerda europeia que triunfava no Alentejo e na Lisnave por procuração" (*Labirinto* 49).

To be sure, this new mythic model of national regeneration was "de vocação não apenas revolucionária mas universalista" (*Mitologia* 147). For, as the communications officer, *Fado*'s most militant revolutionary, drunkenly confesses:

> O que nós pretendíamos era uma verdadeira sublevação popular conduzida pelos camponeses, pela classe operária, pelos oprimidos em geral, a caminho de um socialismo absoluto [...]. Acreditei na revolução, na queda da burguesia, na próxima, iminente vitória final da classe operária [...]. E ocupava-me a imaginar ardentemente [...] a imorredoira classe operária a subir a Avenida num frenesim de hinos e bandeiras, dependurando impiedosamente dos candeeiros os sociais-democratas, os patrões, os polícias, e os lacaios do Capital, e proclamando, na Rotunda, o Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo [...]. [Erguíamos] o paraíso da autêntica democracia popular na Europa apodrecida. (166, 415, 417)

What is farcical about this revolutionary fantasy is its belated belief that a "petit-bourgeois coup" (166) could serve as the original "model for a democratic subversion of the European capitalist order" (*Labirinto* 45). The anachronism of Portugal's revolutionary project ends up both displacing and

reproducing the very terms of its anachronistic colonial enterprise: "as eternamente malogradas tentativas de alfabetizar os bairros da lata no intuito [...] de converter ["operários indiferentes"], como os missionários de África aos pretinhos prometidos ao inferno, ao Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo salvador do tenebroso purgatório capitalista" (*Fado* 425). And like the discarded notion of the "civilizing mission," the Revolution becomes a fetish, the fetish with which incongruously vehement militants endeavor to combat the fetishism of the commodity: "o paraíso da autêntica democracia popular na Europa apodrecida, sordidamente invivível, poluída pela coca-cola, os isqueiros de atirar fora e as pastilhas elásticas, minada pelo cancro das multinacionais e pela exploração infame da economia liberal" (417).

The Revolution in Antunes's *Fado* thus assumes its place in a metonymic chain of "inappropriate" and partial objects which "serve to symbolize the most profound lost object" (Lacan 198). It is endlessly displaced, deferred, only to emerge in a different guise. But it always and ineluctably signifies the lack that structures (revolutionary) desire: "What [the subject] is trying to see [...] is the object as absence. What [he] is looking for and finds is merely a shadow, a shadow behind the curtain. There he will phantasize any magic of presence [...]. What he is looking for is not [...] the phallus—but precisely its absence" (Lacan 182). Among the complex and imbricated narrative strands which make up the structure of *Fado alexandrino*, two contrapuntal phrases stand out in this respect. The first is an urgent whisper by one of the novel's several farcical revolutionaries reported in the communications officer's account of a failed and vaudevillesque left-wing coup: "O país inteiro aguarda de nós esta justa e imprescindível acção libertadora" (*Fado* 431). The meaningful rejoinder to this revolutionary wish-fantasy comes from the colonel's concurrent and desultory narration of his agonizing courtship with his future wife, in the form of the following entreaty: "Mas que teimosa a sua torneirinha está, Artur, comentou a nuvem de perfume redobrando o zelo, a marota quantos mais bejinhos lhe dou mais minguada fica" (*Fado* 431).

The very same object that in *Os cus de Judas* signified "miséria e a maldade da guerra"—"a bandeira pendente do seu mastro idêntica a um pénis sem força" (199), "Salazar ["o *Capado*"] espetava o dedo, única coisa, decerto, que ele alguma vez espetou" (76), "eunucos ministros," "ministros eunucos" (129), etc.—resurfaces in *Fado* as the signifier of the Revolution, or rather of its obsessively made-up absence. In effect, the consensus about 25 April 1974 is precisely that it never rises above the level of what the communications officer calls

"uma revolução de chacha" (166). "Não houve revolução nenhuma" (480), the private, the novel's only proletarian character, concludes: "Não houve uma revolta a sério, os que mandavam antes ocupam o poleiro outra vez [...] de forma que continuamos na mesma terra de merda" (224); "a mesma inalterável, melancólica, estreita paisagem em que apenas se cabe apertado e de pé" (505), "e esta merda sempre igual a esta merda" (541). To go by what the second lieutenant affirms, this is the very same shit, it seems, that is emblematic of the fascist state. For if the anal drive, as Lacan indicates, is the domain of oblativity, of the gift, then the surfeit of human waste that is Portugal's colonial war in *Os cus de Judas* compensates in the last instance for all the lacks (e.g., the "absence of History") which the regime has failed consistently to make good.

As a "gigantic" lieutenant beseeches the protagonist of *Os cus de Judas* "in a little boy's voice": "Doutor arranje-me a tal doença antes que eu rebente aqui na estrada da merda que tenho dentro" (154); and the narrator himself later exclaims, "trazíamos vinte e cinco meses de guerra nas tripas, vinte e cinco meses de comer merda, e beber merda, e lutar por merda, e adoecer por merda, e cair por merda" (211); "passámos vinte e sete meses nos cus de Judas [na] mesma merda" (241). Excrement is all that the State, and its post-revolutionary dejecta, can offer its citizens in lieu of what it ought to have accorded them: democracy, freedom, human rights. To paraphrase Lacan once again, it is at the anal level that the fascist government inscribes itself "in its morality (*dans sa morale*)" (104). When, as a result of the gaping hole at its core, the *Estado Novo* is caught egregiously short even of its own paltry objectives, the only thing it can give its subjects is precisely shit. Rather than Hegel's Idea, then, what the *Estado Novo* "ethically embodies" is ultimately shit as well. "É curioso como tudo se tornou tão depressa como antes do golpe" (638), the second lieutenant in *Fado alexandrino* laments, thus alluding to the very same *nothing*, the negation of History that, in the Portuguese war novels mentioned above, figures the Salazarist regime's absolute lack of progress or development.

Not only does this absence of History return to determine what José Saramago in *História do cerco de Lisboa* terms the Revolution's inaugural *yes*, but it has reemerged as the lack that structures and engenders desire itself. As with the "Purloined Letter" in Lacan's famous reading of Poe's detective story, it is not for a specific revolutionary signified—for instance, the authentic revolutionary *content* which Marx predicts will necessarily go *beyond the phrase*; it is not for the Revolution's signified that *Fado*'s characters yearn. Rather, it is their closeness to the Revolution as signifier which appears to determine them

as subjects. What the April Revolution means is thus at once everything and nothing, either "the most profound lost object," or, "the object as absence" (Lacan 198, 182). And the fullness or emptiness of its meaning depends precisely on each character's perceived proximity to it.

As the colonel muses in reply to the private's outraged question whether the Revolution was nothing but "os trutas a engolirem-se uns aos outros, à bulha, a ver quem se amanhava melhor" (*Fado* 317):

> Não a revolução nem os que fizeram a revolução mas os vorazes micróbios cancerosos que dela se alimentavam e em torno dela se moviam, partidos políticos, jogos de influências, ódios pessoais, as insaciáveis ambiçõezinhas dos frustrados: quero ser marechal, quero ser rico [...] quero um barco, uma casa com piscina, uma televisão a cores, uma amante cara [...] quero lixar os outros, quero esmigalhar os outros, quero enrabar os outros, quero ficar sozinho, heróico e de bronze, no cimo vertiginoso do pedestal. (317)

As though to subscribe to Flaubert's memorable shorthand for his novelization of the 1848 revolution in *L'Éducation sentimentale:* "le sentimentalisme [...] suit la politique et en réproduit les phases" ["sentimentalism follows politics and reproduces its phases"], *Fado*'s parodically Dickensian plot is structured by a similar exchange of objects of desire. Hence, the private and the communications officer discover they have been in love with the same woman, the lieutenant-colonel's wife becomes the communications officer's lover, and the colonel's daughter turns out to be the lover of the second lieutenant's ex-wife. But, whereas in Flaubert, *style* emerges as the compensation for the baseness of the Real, in Antunes's novel, literary space offers no such consolation. It has itself become simulacral. It is not only that *Fado alexandrino* has reduced the most significant event in Portugal's recent history to a serial recapitulation of earlier models, a farce without even its tragic original, but its labyrinthine plot, the tropological exuberance of its descriptive language, the systematic imbrication of its narrative voices, and indeed its "alexandrine" structure itself, suggest an excessive diegetic control. They figure a modernist project which, like the Revolution, comes after the end of—and as a supplement to—a modernity which Portugal supposedly experienced only as an absence.

Fado alexandrino becomes, in this sense, the site of a temporal *post* to a *modo* that was always an empty place. In *Fado*, then, the revolutionary *no* [*não*] is never pressed into the service of a *yes*, as it is in Saramago's conventional dialectical

reading of Portugal's recent history. It is canceled but not preserved. It remains *nothing:* an absence incessantly displaced and disguised as something else. Like the subject's desire for "that part of himself [that it] loses at birth," revolutionary desire, too, ultimately reveals its "essential affinity" with that "initial state from which the living entity has at one time or another departed and to which it is striving to return by the circuitous paths along which its development leads" (Freud, *Pleasure* 45), with "the zone of death," for "the [subject's] search [for] the part of himself lost forever [is] profoundly a death drive" (Lacan 198-9, 205).

In this way, the promise of new life which the April Revolution exemplifies in most of the war novels I examine above is radically refigured in Lobo Antunes' *Fado* as a familiar metropolitan death. Like Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*, *Fado alexandrino* closes with a "sacrifice" of sorts. In the last chapter, "the communications officer [lies] crucified on the carpet" (492), apparently as symbolic a figure as Dussardier in Flaubert's novel, who falls, "les bras en croix" ["his arms spread out as on a cross"] (446), cut down by his former friend and mentor Sénécal's saber on December 4, 1852, "the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." Yet unlike Dussardier, Antunes's militant does not succumb with the name of the Republic on his lips. Indeed, echoing the claim of the protagonist of Manuel Alegre's *Jornada de África* that "tudo o que é acção e história e rasgo e risco se passa sempre do outro lado [...], nada acontece aqui" (19), he consigns to History's proverbial dustbin his radical utopian dreams:

> Quem continua a preocupar-se com a revolução [...] quem persiste, neste país, em querer mudar o mundo, quando em Portugal, não é?, o mundo é que nos muda a nós [...] as pessoas alteram-se [...] mas as instituições nunca [...] terminam sempre [...] por regressar à tona, eternas, intactas, teimosas, invioladas, sempre [...] os mesmos ricos, os mesmos pobres. (*Fado* 504-5)

Occasioned by no identifiable motive or ideal (an accident, an obscure and senseless crime of passion?), the death of this former revolutionary is thus also supplementary, both too much and too late, yet another instance of narratorial and symbolic exuberance. An ironically fitting culmination to an abyssal utopian desire, it is as empty and exchangeable, as horrifically inconsequential as the meaningless sacrifices of Kafka's Joseph K. or Georg Bendemann. Ultimately, as all four veterans die in melodramatic succession at the end of the novel, the death of the communications officer is reinscribed in a chain of signifiers that mean always and ineluctably nothing. For Lobo Antunes, Portugal

after the April Revolution, and in the wake of a series of risible attempts to contrive for itself a protagonist's role in the very same narrative of emancipation which it had evoked to legitimate its grisly colonial adventure, locates itself once again outside History. For "em Portugal [...] tudo estagna e se suspende no tempo" (*Ordem* 19). In this light, the yearning for revolutionary salvation seems as deluded as the decrepit colonists' reverential waiting in *As naus* for King Sebastian's foretokened ride across the ocean of time. And so it is that the Event that for almost half a century the whole nation had sedulously awaited at the edge of an historical void finally reveals itself in Antunes's *Fado* to be the very "História, com maiúscula ou com letra pequena, [que] já não passa por nós" (Alegre, *Jornada* 78).

In figuring the April Revolution as a foreclosure of History, Lobo Antunes's fiction reiterates its refusal to represent an "alternate" subjectivity. Whereas Alegre's and Melo's novels posit a third or "universal" moment in which an unpresentable and radically heterogenous enemy is ultimately reconciled with a reluctantly imperialist self, Antunes's *Fado* insists upon the incommensurability of metropolitan and (post)colonial times. Between the former and the latter a differend, the "heterogeneity of two distinct and discontinuous phrase regimens" (Lyotard 181), opens up. It is to this gap between the "truth" of the African struggles for independence and that of the process that led up to Portugal's April Revolution that Lobo Antunes attempts to pay heed in his writing. His narratives try in effect to track the waning currency of the West's notorious long narrative, to chronicle its reiterated failures to accomplish the enlightenment project of emancipation. They seek to inscribe in their interstices what Lyotard has called the liquidation of the project of modernity.

Notes

[1] It is into a similar death wish that Oskar's "desire to return to the womb" (49) seems in effect to transform itself at his mother's funeral: "He wished to go down into the pit with Mama and the fetus. And there he wished to remain [...] until his mama for his sake and he for her sake should rot away" (165).

[2] "The goal of centuries moving steadily toward tolerance, kindness, mutual understanding" (Carpentier 96).

[3] Lourenço's title is obviously a tribute to Octavio Paz' imaginative psychoanalysis of Mexico's national character, *El labirinto de la soledad*.

[4] "This space is not a delimiting line, but rather a fissure or fracture of a line; it is the 'threshold of capacity to which Conrad pointed though he never attained that capacity himself'" (López 46).

[5] In my book *Imaginary Geographies in Portuguese and Lusophone-African Literature: Narratives of Discovery and Empire* (2007).

[6] Published in English translation as *The Return of the Caravels*, this novel, the last of a quartet written after the "Angola trilogy," in a sense "literalizes" a metaphoric section of the quartet's third novel, *O Auto dos danados*, in which a character appears to hallucinate about boarding a train which lands him "em Lisboa perto de um rio enorme no qual navegavam caravelas e guindastes, no meio de descobridores de gibão, de barbas iluminadas por tormentas, especiarias e coqueiros, morrendo de escorbuto nos bancos da Avenida [...]. De tempos a tempos, à noite, uma furgoneta da polícia, recolhia travestis e vice-reis a caminho dos calabouços do Governo Civil, onde os funcionários [...] recebiam, surpreendidos, ameaças de enforcamento ou de degredo, gritadas por almirantes [...] num português medieval que encantava os homens-mulheres" (272-3).

[7] The reading which follows significantly revises the one I offer in "The Discreet Seductiveness of the Crumbling Empire: Sex, Violence and Colonialism in the Fiction of António Lobo Antunes." In elaborating this revision, I have been especially indebted to Phyllis Peres's thoughtful critique of my position in "Love and Imagination among the Ruins of Empire: Antonio Lobo Antunes's *Os cus de Judas* and *Fado alexandrino*."

[8] "The Negro / with the trumpet at his lips / Has dark moons of weariness beneath his eyes [...] The music from the trumpet at his lips is honey mixed with liquid fire" (Hughes 114).

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Old Soldiers Never Die, They Just Tell Their Stories: Lobo Antunes and Some Others

George Monteiro

My point is that there are meaningful links of various kinds between António Lobo Antunes's earliest fiction and the fiction of the English Malcolm Lowry, the Polish Joseph Conrad, and the American Ernest Hemingway.[1] Speaking, in 1996, of his initial reaction to Hemingway's work, Lobo Antunes recalled: "Ele passou pela minha adolescência sem eu me aperceber de que era tão importante e de que podia aprender muito com ele. Há determinadas soluções técnicas que o tipo encontra com facilidade e que são aparentemente fáceis" (*Visão*). ["He slipped by me during my adolescence without my having perceived that he was as important as he was or that I might learn much from him. There are certain technical solutions that the fellow brings off with facility and that only appear to be easy."]

Some of Hemingway's "technical solutions" are mirrored, I would venture, in Lobo Antunes's novel *Os cus de Judas*, published in 1979, and re-titled *South of Nowhere* in its American version. In certain discernible ways this novel parallels Hemingway's 1950 novel *Across the River and Into the Trees*, a work that remains overshadowed by Hemingway's great successes in the novel, *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*.[2]

The last novel that Hemingway completed and saw through to publication, *Across the River and Into the Trees* appeared a decade after the appearance of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, his controversial 1940 novel about the Spanish Civil War. The controversies over Hemingway's big novel were two-fold,

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 247-59.
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political and esthetic. On the one hand, readers were unclear as to whether or not the author was sympathetic to the Republican cause; while on the other, critics questioned the efficiency of Hemingway's literary realism—did he get the Spanish character right or did his imagination fail him when he tried to invent incidents and episodes that would realize the Spanish character? The plausibility of the episode in which the peasants organize a ritual killing of the village "fascists," for instance, was vociferously questioned.[3]

Between the time of Hemingway's experiences in Spain and his publication of *Across the River and Into the Trees*, the horrific events of the Second World War occurred. Whether or not Hemingway intended it to be, this novel was hailed as his definitive World War II novel, to be compared (usually, as it turned out, unfavorably) with his own 1929 World War I novel, *A Farewell to Arms*. Expectations were high when Hemingway's publisher announced the novel. By the time it appeared in bookstores in quantities, however, reviewers and critics had weighed in, almost unanimously attacking the book and, in some cases, discrediting its author in the bargain. Only one reviewer of prominence, the novelist John O'Hara, holding forth on the front-page of the *New York Times Book Review*, stood up for Hemingway:

> The most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare, has brought out a new novel. The title of that novel is *Across the River and Into the Trees*. The author, of course, is Ernest Hemingway, the most important, and outstanding author out of the millions of writers who have lived since 1616. (1)

There were responses to O'Hara's grand and grandiose claim for Hemingway's importance—one of which was the wry, but appropriate question: "And what makes O'Hara think Shakespeare is that good?" The *New Yorker* joined in the attack with E. B. White's delicious parody of *Across the River and Into the Trees* entitled "Across the Street and Into the Grill"(28).

Since Hemingway's novel is not well known, it might be useful to summarize the story it tells. Centered on a professional soldier, an officer in the United States Army, its setting is Venice and the action takes place over a three-day weekend. During the war just ended (World War II), Colonel Richard Cantwell had achieved the rank of Brigadier General, but was broken in rank as punishment for breaking some military rule or regulation. The narrative begins in the present, flashes back to the events of the past few days,

and then returns to the present for its conclusion. Embedded in the middle of this flashback is the long monologue the Colonel addresses to Renata, his nineteen-year-old lover. His account is one of mistakes and tragedies in war as seen and practiced by a commander of troops in the European campaign. The young woman, a willing and eager listener, only occasionally interrupts the Colonel's story with a question or brief remark.

The Colonel, who has already suffered several heart attacks, is certain that these three days will be his final ones with Renata, the last days of his life, and so, like an ancient mariner, he wishes to tell all, to get it all down. His tale is peppered with names of places, battles, generals and politicians, as he tries to set the record straight. This part of the book is virtually a long dramatic speech, in the course of which the Colonel mentions not only Shakespeare, but the Brownings—Elizabeth and Robert—grand English presences in Venice, the latter being, as everyone knows, the prime practitioner of the dramatic monologue in Victorian literature. It is worth noting, incidentally, that future editions of Hemingway's novel will benefit from footnotes useful to general readers of a generation and more removed from the lived experiences of World War II. The names of generals such as Omar Bradley, Leclerc, and Mark Clark, the British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery and the Germans Erwin Rommel and Ernst Udet already call for identification. So, too, would George S. Patton (the Colonel dismissively calls him Georgie) and Dwight D. Eisenhower require glossing, were it not for the durable life on the television screen of the movie starring George C. Scott in the case of the former, and the fact that the latter served two terms as President of the United States. If Hemingway's contemporary reviewers disliked not only his hero but his hero's account of how things were done at the highest levels of the Allied command during World War II, the present-day reader coming to *Across the River and Into the Trees* for the first time, more often than not, will find that his cultural literacy is not up to the task of making sense of all the references.[4]

The relevance of this factor to my subject seems to me certain, if not immediately apparent. Novelists rely on their readers' cultural literacy to differing degrees, but in the two novels under discussion—*Across the River and Into the Trees* and *Os cus de Judas*—one's cultural literacy is put to the test. Hemingway's litany of battles and generals and politicians can be set up against Lobo Antunes's plethora of names of (usually) Americans and the products they create or use. Lobo Antunes's physician-soldier suffuses his war

stories with references (and I exclude Portuguese names): to actors—Mae West, Douglas Fairbanks, Edward G. Robinson, David Niven, Fritz Lang, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, James Dean (he's called a "blond archangel"), Lauren Bacall, Humphrey Bogart; to movie directors—Antonioni, Nicholas Ray, Buñuel; to musicians—Thelonius Monk, John Coltrane, Ben Webster, Charley Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon (whose song "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover" is quoted at length)[5]; to historical figures—Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Robespierre, Camilo Torreses, the Allendes of Chile, Rosa Luxemburg, Al Capone; to artists—Giacometti, Magritte, Salvador Dali (his clocks), Matisse, El Greco (his blind men), Vermeer; to a Russian cosmonaut, Yury Gagarin; to magazines and movies—*Reader's Digest, Better Homes and Gardens, Gone with the Wind*; to fictional characters—Huckleberry Finn's father, Peter Pan, taxi drivers in Ohnet, Nicholas Ray's American actresses; to poets and writers—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Samuel Beckett (and his Godot), Lewis Carroll, J. D. Salinger, John Dos Passos.

This list could be used, in a sense, to test the reaches and limits of contemporary cultural literacy. But, taken in the aggregate these names have a clear function in Lobo Antunes's novel. Whereas the Modernists employed Classical and Romantic references—Joyce's Ulysses and Daedalus, T. S. Eliot's Tiresias, Pessoa's Faust—to offer a contrast between grander worlds of myth and their own impoverished times—something apart from the psychology or personality of their poetical or fictional characters—Lobo Antunes employs his largely contemporary references to establish and define the interior world of his story's antihero. Cultural and historical, these references serve to characterize an individual who is *au courant* with his times, aware of the icons and personalities of his media-swamped age, but whose very being, if you will, is in thrall to the memory that wracks life—his war-experience in Angola. Indeed, the dramatized story of *Os cus de Judas* can be seen as its narrator's attempt to talk his way into some sort of rapprochement with his spiritually and psychologically crippled self. As such, it is a veritable register, far-reaching if virtually indiscriminate, of popular culture—American popular culture, mainly—that has inundated his and our time. Lobo Antunes's device is one that he shares with the literary figure his narrator most explicitly identifies with—Malcolm Lowry, the author of the 1947 novel *Under the Volcano*.

Lobo Antunes writes:

> O meu verdadeiro nome é Malcolm Lowry, sou escuro como o túmulo onde jaz o meu amigo, escrevo romances imortais, recomendo *Le gusta este jardín que es suyo? evite que sus hijos lo destruían*, e o meu cadaver será lançado na última página, como o de um cão, para o fundo de um barranco. (54)[6]

> [My real name is Malcolm Lowry, I am as dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid, I write immortal novels, I admonish, *¿Le gusta este jardín que es suyo? ¡Evite que sus hijos lo destruyan*! and my corpse will be thrown onto the last page, like a dog to the bottom of a ravine. (33-34)]

Lowry's antihero, the Consul, is shot and his body thrown into a ravine. The last sentence of the narrative is "Somebody threw a dead dog after him down the ravine" (388), followed by a blank page, which, in turn, is succeeded by a page with, at its center in large capital letters, the legend that has been mentioned several times previously. This sign behind the fence threatens expulsion to anyone who would do this garden damage.

> ¿GUSTA ESTE JARDÍN
> QUE ES SUYO?
> ¡EVITE QUE SUS HIJOS LO DESTRUYAN! (398)

> [DO YOU LIKE THIS GARDEN
> THAT IS YOURS?
> SEE TO IT THAT YOUR CHILDREN DO NOT DESTROY IT].

Lobo Antunes's homage to Malcolm Lowry links his antiheroic narrator to the garrulous, doomed, drunken Consul of the legendary drinking novelist's *Under the Volcano*, possibly the most thoroughly alcohol-soaked novel in the English language, perhaps in any of the world's literatures.[7] Moreover, as the English poet-critic Stephen Spender claimed, "*Under the Volcano* is, it is true, perhaps the best account of a 'drunk' in fiction" (viii). Whether or not Lobo Antunes's novel holds its own as an alcohol-soaked narrative I shall leave to others. Suffice it to say that its pages are drenched with Cuba libres, beer, vodka, Drambuie ("o oitavo") and scotch—Logan's and JB ("sem agua").[8]

This fact—the talk of drink—brings us back to Hemingway, someone Lobo Antunes's narrator evokes with admiration:

> Um duplo sem gelo? Tem razão, talvez desse modo logre a lucidez sem ilusões dos

> bêbados de Hemingway que passaram, gole a gole, para o outro lado da angústia, alcançando uma espécie de serenidade polar, vizinha da morte, é certo, mas que a ausência de esperança e do frenesim ansioso que ela inevitavelmente traz consigo torna quase apaziguadora e feliz, e consiga enfrentar a ferocidade da manhã dentro de um frasco de *Logans* que a proteja, tal como os cadáveres dos bichos se conservam em líquidos especiais nas prateleiras dos museus. Talvez desse modo se consigam sorrir risos de Sócrates depois da cicuta, levanter-se do colchão, ir à janela, e defronte da cidade matinal, nítida, atarefada, ruidosa, não se sentir perseguidos pelos impediosos fantasmas da própria solidão, de que os rostos sardónicos e tristes, tão semelhantes ao nosso, se desenham no vidro para melhor nos troçarem; há derrotas, percebe, que a gente sempre pode transformer, pelo menos, em vitoriosas calamidades. (159)
>
> [A double Scotch? You're right, maybe this way you'll achieve the lucidity of Hemingway's drunkards who voyaged to the other side of anguish, achieving a kind of serenity resembling death, yes, but a serenity that is almost comforting. For you might be capable of facing the ferocity of the morning only inside a protective bottle of Logan's Scotch as you become something very much like a laboratory specimen preserved in formaldehyde. Maybe this way we will be able to smile as did Socrates after he drank the hemlock, get out of bed, go to the window and confront the city, bright, busy, noisy, and not feel persecuted by the impious ghosts of our own solitude, whose sardonic and sad faces mock us in the bathroom mirror. There are defeats, you see, that we can always turn into triumphant calamities. (105)]

There are still other instances of homage to Hemingway in Lobo Antunes's novel, if we have eyes to see them, in the recurrent imagery and symbolism of rain. "Janeiro acabava," writes Lobo Antunes, "chovia, e íamos morrer, íamos morrer e chovia, chovia, sentado na cabina da camioneta, ao lado do conductor, de boné nos olhos, o vibrar de um cigarro infinito na mão, iniciei a dolorosa aprendizagem da agonia" (43). ["It was the end of January, it was raining and we were going to die, we were going to die and it was raining, raining; sitting in the cab of the truck, next to the driver, with the visor of my cap over my eyes and a cigarette in my hand, I began my apprenticeship to death" (26)]. Although the rain-war equation has its early precedents in war fiction and continues to be common enough, it is possible that Lobo Antunes's soldier (or at least his creator) has been reading his Hemingway—*A Farewell to Arms*, to be exact—in which Hemingway's ex-soldier, having just said good-

bye to his dead lover, walks out into the rain. Indeed, "rain" is the last word of Frederic Henry's narration, the last word of Hemingway's novel—rain that has fallen at every bad turn or destructive event in the novel.

Structurally, however, *Os cus de Judas* resembles the large portion of *Across the River and Into the Trees* that Hemingway devotes to his unheroic soldier's narrative of war as told to a listener, who only occasionally intervenes, and then briefly. Lobo Antunes's novel is one long narrative told by his unheroic soldier, as in Hemingway, to a woman.[9] If Colonel Richard Cantwell tells much of his story to a young lover in a restaurant, Lobo Antunes's soldier-physician, dropping down several notches on the social scale, begins to tell his protracted story to a woman, a stranger picked up in a bar. In both instances, long narration—Hemingway's and Lobo Antunes's—taxes our willing suspension of disbelief to the point of annoyance. Hemingway's colonel keeps offering to break off his tale, while Lobo Antunes's ex-soldier, obviously unwilling to break off his story, uses, cannily, an almost rampant allusiveness to all sorts of beings, things, and arbitrarily brought-in events. Colonel Cantwell informs an Italian citizen who spent the war in wartime Italy; while the Portuguese soldier needs to entertain, as well as inform, this Portuguese woman standing before him, one who, presumably, spent the war years far from the African campaigns.

> [L]he estou contando uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar, uma história inventada com que a comovo a fim de conseguir mais depressa (um terço de paleio, um terço de álcool, um terço de ternura, sabe como é)? que você veja nascer comigo a manhã na claridade azul pálida que fura as persianas e sobe dos lençóis, revela a curva adormecida de uma nádega, um perfil de bruços no colchão, os nossos corpos confundidos num torpor sem mistério. (81)

> [I am narrating for you a cheap, implausible novel, a contrived story composed of one third bullshit, one third alcohol and one third tenderness, you know what I mean? to persuade you to watch the sunrise with me in the pale-blue clarity that pierces the blinds and crawls through the sheets, revealing the curve of a thigh, the silhouette of a shoulder on the mattress, our bodies entangled in torpor. (51)]

But there is, unmistakably, a generational gap separating Lobo Antunes from Hemingway. The times have changed and what is now permitted or tolerated in a best-selling writer would have astonished earlier generations of readers. If Hemingway's explicit language for bodily functions and curses and swearing

were excised from *A Farewell to Arms* (as they were), often to be replaced by even more suggestive dashes, Lobo Antunes, fifty years later, can pretty much use the language he wants to when talking directly about what was pretty much forbidden to him and everyone else before the 25th of April Revolution.

Here is how Hemingway handles the scene in *Across the River and Into the Trees* in which his protagonist commemorates his return, in the immediacy of 1946, the first postwar year, to the place of his wounding in World War I:

> The river was slow and a muddy blue here, with reeds along the edges, and the Colonel, no one being in sight, squatted low, and looking across the river from the bank where you could never show your head in daylight, relieved himself in the exact place where he had determined, by triangulation, that he had been badly wounded thirty years before.
>
> "A poor effort," he said aloud to the river and the river bank that were heavy with autumn quiet and wet from the fall rains. "But my own."
>
> He stood up and looked around. There was no one in sight and he had left the car down the sunken road in front of the last and saddest rebuilt house in Fossalta.
>
> "Now I'll complete the monument," he said to no one but the dead, and he took an old Sollingen clasp knife such as German poachers carry, from his pocket. It locked on opening and, twirling it, he dug a neat hole in the moist earth. He cleaned the knife on his right combat boot and then inserted a brown ten thousand lira note in the hole and tamped it down and put the grass that he had cored out, over it.
>
> "That is twenty years at 500 lira a year for the Medaglia d'Argento al Valore Militare. The V.C. carries ten guineas, I believe. The D.S.C. is non-productive. The Silver Star is free. I'll keep the change," he said.
>
> It's fine now, he thought. It has merde, money, blood; look how that grass grows; and the iron's in the earth along with Gino's leg, both of Randolfo's legs, and my right kneecap. It's a wonderful monument. It has everything. Fertility, money, blood and iron. Sounds like a nation. Where fertility, money, blood and iron is, there is the fatherland. We need coal though. We ought to get some coal. (18-19)

Here, carefully elaborated for effect, is the naturalist's way of establishing his connection to the natural world. Here, too, in a sense, is a pastoral scene, one radically updated to characterize the unforgiving years of deprivation in a post-war Europe, one in which are melded the simulacra of the horrors of war

(amputations and burials) with the shibboleths of Bismarck's plan or map for the making of a pan-German nation.

Thirty years later, Lobo Antunes sets his cloacal scene indoors:

> Sofia, instalo-me na sanita como uma galinha a ajeitar-se no seu choco, abanando as nádegas murchas das penas na auréola de plástico, solto um ovo de oiro que deixa na loiça um rastro ocre de merda, puxo o autoclismo, cacarejo contentamentos de poedeira, e é como se essa melancólica proeza me justificasse a existência, como se sentar-me aqui, noite após noite, diante do espelho, a observar no vidro os vincos amarelos das olheiras e as rugas que em torno da boca se multiplicam numa fina teia misteriosa, idêntica à que cobre de leve os quadros de Leonardo, me assegurasse que ao fim de tantos anos de deixar-te permaneço vivo, durando, Sofia [...]. Que imbecile aquela guerra, Sofia, digo-te eu aqui acocorado na sanita diante do espelho que implacavelmente me envelhece, sob esta luz de aquário e estes azulejos vidrados, estes metais, estes frascos, estas louças sem arestas [...]. (180-81, 190)

> [Sofia, I am sitting on the toilet like a hen incubating an egg, no golden egg here, just a trace of shit in the bowl; I flush the toilet, cackle with contentment, and it is as if this feat has justified my existence, it is as if sitting here, night after night, looking in the mirror at the yellow creases of the circles under my eyes and the wrinkles around my mouth, a thin mysterious skein identical to the lines that lightly cover Leonardo's paintings, provides me with assurance that even after all these years since I abandoned you I am still alive, Sofia, so to speak [...]. What an idiotic war, Sofia, I say to you sitting on the toilet in front of the mirror that ages me implacably, under this aquarium light and these glassy tiles, these pipes, these bottles, these porcelain fixtures [...]. (119-20, 125)]

Compared with this soldier's "feat"—deflationary, narrow, confessional and narcissistic—Hemingway's officer's defecation on the banks of a foreign river is grandly epic, a well-executed ritual with its attendant mock-solemnity.[10]

Os cus de Judas also recalls Joseph Conrad—as does Hemingway's novel in its own way—especially Conrad's central-Africa story "Heart of Darkness." Lobo Antunes's narrator is a more spasmodic, Dionysian teller of tales than is Conrad's Marlow, whose African journey has a mysterious purpose, a vague focus, and its end point in the legendary Kurtz. Indeed, in Lobo Antunes's book, it is almost as if we have the kind of story of terror and horror that

Marlowe could have sprung on Kurtz's fiancée back in Belgium rather than the great lie his silence tells. Lobo Antunes's book tries to spell out the images of Kurtz's words—"the horror, the horror"—in terms of Portugal's colonial war in Angola. The barely controlled, shotgun narrative that Lobo Antunes's physician-writer fires at us has the power of true Dionysian blackness. The skulls on posts surrounding the site of Kurtz's last stand have become in Lobo Antunes's narrative a cascade of pulsating blood, blown and severed body parts, photo-ops—when, for instance, soldiers photograph themselves standing with the severed thighs of an "enemy." What Hemingway's Colonel refers to, almost neutrally, as the losses of war, Lobo Antunes's narrator describes in the lurid colors of a banal story gone screamingly mad.

Yet it has been this physician-writer's illusion that, once away from Angola, he will be able to shed the war and everything that goes with it.

> [P]osso regressar a Lisboa sem alarmar ninguém, sem pegar os meus mortos a ninguém, a lembrança dos meus camaradas mortos a ninguém, voltar para Lisboa, entrar nos restaurantes, nos bares, nos cinemas, nos hotéis, nos supermercados, nos hospitais, e toda a gente verificar que trago a merda limpa no cu limpo, porque se não podem abrir os ossos do crânio e ver o furriel a raspar as botas com um pedaço de pau e a repetir Caralho caralho caralho caralho caralho, acocorado nos degraus da administração. (235)

> [I can return to Lisbon without alarming anyone, without imposing the memory of my dead companions on anyone, I can return to Lisbon, go into the restaurants, the bars, the movies, the hotels, the supermarkets, the hospitals, and everyone will be assuming that I have clean shit in my clean ass because they can't crack open my skull and see the sergeant scraping his boots with a piece of wood, muttering Shit shit shit shit shit shit on the steps of the administration building. (149)][11]

This is what, in our time, Conrad's Kurtz's operatic cry—"the horror, the horror"—has come to. It is as if, to his Hemingway and Conrad, Lobo Antunes has added something as well of the French physician-writer Céline, still another damaged veteran of war.

Not even the casual reader will ever mistake Lobo Antunes's style, his endless cascading of metaphors and similes for Hemingway's or Conrad's far more Apollonian, often classically minimalist, writing. (Lowry's style is a different matter, as we have seen.) Yet it should not be forgotten that for all his

backward looks, Lobo Antunes remains, in the end, a writer of his own time. If his works parody those of earlier masters of fiction, they do so—and this is significant—not to ridicule or diminish them in any way.

By way of conclusion, let me again quote Lobo Antunes on Hemingway: "O Hemingway é um escritor que muito respeito. Ele tinha grandes problemas de afirmação pessoal, a todos os níveis e não só a nível literário" (*Jornal de Letras*) ["Hemingway is a writer I very much respect. He had great problems with self-assurance, at all levels, not just at the literary level"]. We have only to substitute the name "Lobo Antunes" for that of "Hemingway," and that revised sentence will tell us something we need to know if we are to appreciate the well-springs of Lobo Antunes's demon-driven fiction.

Notes

[1] In this paper I have chosen not to take up the matter of William Faulkner's overall influence on António Lobo Antunes's fiction, most strikingly present, I would suggest, on the narrative strategies of *Os cus de Judas* and *Fado alexandrino*. For a spirited reading of Lobo Antunes's *Auto dos danados* in the context of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, see Margarida Vale de Gato, "The Influencing Machine: Faulkner Revised by António Lobo Antunes."

[2] References to these works are indicated throughout this paper by page numbers within parentheses.

[3] See, for example, Arturo Barea's case against Hemingway's depiction of Spain and its people in "Not Spain but Hemingway."

[4] In *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil offer the following useful definition of "cultural literacy": "Cultural literacy, unlike expert knowledge, is meant to be shared by everyone. It is that shifting body of information that our culture has found useful, and therefore worth preserving. Only a small fraction of what we read and hear gains a secure place on the memory shelves of the culturally literate, but the importance of this information is beyond question. This shared information is the foundation of our public discourse. It allows us to comprehend our daily newspapers and news reports, to understand our peers and leaders, and even to share our jokes. Cultural literacy is the context of what we say and read..." (ix).

[5] Hemingway's Colonel Cantwell offers a fifty-first way to leave a lover: he suffers a fatal heart attack.

[6] The italicized sentences come from Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano.*

[7] Nearly two decades after *Under the Volcano* was published, Stephen Spender found it necessary to defend Lowry: "A book in which for three quarters of the time the hero is drunk may seem too special, too much a case history. It is not, they may protest, about normal life, and therefore it does not concern them [...]. But it is only at the very end that the Consul seems his own special case. The fragmentariness of this last section rather serves to underline the control and lucidity of all that happens until the Consul's death. For this is a most lucid novel" (viii).

[8] I am reminded of Hemingway's description in *Across the River and Into the Trees* of the Montgomery dry martini—15 parts gin to one part vermouth—so named because the British commander Field Marshall Montgomery would not consider moving his troops to attack unless

his forces outnumbered his enemy's by a ratio of 15 to 1.

[9] *Memória de elefante*, it will be recalled, is the title that Lobo Antunes first intended for *Os cus de Judas* but assigned to a different work published in the same year. (See: http://www.citi.pt/cultura/literatura/romance/lobo_antunes/ala63.html).

[10] I do not wish to belabor the suggestion that the literary source for Lobo Antunes's scene is Hemingway's scene in *Across the River and Into the Trees*. Perhaps it constitutes a coincidence of the imaginary, a reflection of literary temperament. What is more interesting is that these similar scenes are nevertheless in no way interchangeable. Neither writer could have agreed to that. As T. S. Eliot wrote about one's earlier writing, "That was a way of saying it then." It is interesting, too, that in this scene Lobo Antunes reaches out to Leonardo's paintings to help characterize his narrator—even as, in Hemingway's novel, a central symbol of the Colonel's values is a portrait of the young Renata herself.

[11] In my opinion, a more forceful equivalent for "caralho" in this immediate context would be "fuck"—not "shit"—though I can see how the translator's choice reinforces the novel's often "excremental" atmosphere.

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Lobo Antunes, the Psychiatrist

António Carlos Trigo de Bettencourt

Abstract: This article examines António Lobo Antunes as a psychiatrist and the scientific articles on literary creation he wrote in collaboration with Daniel Sampaio on Lewis Carroll and *Alice in Wonderland*, in an attempt to interpret this work through the psychiatric condition of the author, and on D. Duarte and the *Leal conselheiro*, focusing retrospectively on the psychiatric problems of the king throughout his work. Also, where close connections between Antunes's first novels are observed, brief references are made to two other articles concerning the role of the psychiatrist in society, as well as to problems of group analysis.

The son of João Alfredo Figueiredo Lobo Antunes, one of the most respected Portuguese neuropathologists, professor of neurology at the Medical Faculty of Lisbon, and grandnephew of Pedro Almeida Lima, the first Portuguese neurosurgeon, the disciple and successor of Egas Moniz, António Lobo Antunes's contacts with medicine and with the universe of mental disorders materialized very early. Antunes's choice of medicine, however, was not his personal decision, since he would rather have taken a literary degree. His natural ability as a writer was revealed at a very early age and has always overwhelmed everything else. It is only on account of his father's imposition, and against his own desire, that he enrolled in medicine at the age of sixteen.

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 261-66.
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After his return from war in 1973, he chose psychiatry since his first and favoured choice—surgery—seemed very difficult and implied a lot of competition. He began working at the Hospital Miguel Bombarda. It was at Hospital de Santa Maria, however, that he met Daniel Sampaio, who even now remains one of his closest friends. Until 1985, he devoted himself to psychiatry, practicing both at Hospital Miguel Bombarda and in several other hospitals around the suburbs of Lisbon. He also practiced at a private clinic he co-owned with Daniel Sampaio. It is from this close friendship and collaboration that four articles were written and published in scientific magazines. They dealt with psychiatric issues related to literature and to artistic creation. They also addressed the role of the psychiatrist in society, as well as scientific questions related to group analysis.

The first of those articles is entitled "*Alice no país das maravilhas* ou a esquizofrenia esconjurada" ("*Alice in Wonderland*, or Conjured Schizophrenia"); published in 1978, as the title suggests, it is a psychoanalytic approach to Lewis Carroll's classic. The authors begin the study by summing up all of the important historical data about the author and his time, focusing on Charles Lutwige Dodgson's (Lewis Carroll's real name) family life. In their analysis of the book and its symbolic mechanisms, they try to prove that it is through Lewis Carroll, the fantasist, the language innovator, the master of nonsense, and in his transformation into an autonomous entity that the rigid, boring, isolated and solitary Charles Dodgson is able to conjure up his psychosis. That is, Lewis Carroll is the indispensable counterpart that allows Charles Dodgson an ordinary existence.

Everything we know about Dodgson's life points to schizoid behavior that is nonetheless overcome by the precarious balance provided by Lewis Carroll's existence, which protected Dodgson from his own schizophrenia. Dodgson is Carroll's Victorian guardian or, as we might say, the super-ego of his own instinctive and creative activity, controlling him by mathematical abstraction and precision. On the other hand, they also try to prove psychoanalytically that Alice was not Charles's mother—as until then all the critics had claimed and defended—but instead was Charles himself. As to Alice's identification with the author, we have to note that Dodgson, due to the distance imposed by his own father, never identified himself with a paternal figure. Rather, he identified himself with a little girl, together with his four sisters with whom he had played during his childhood. Charles never came to terms with adulthood.

The sloppy and disturbing fall of Alice represents nothing more than a birth, together with the anguish and anxiety felt from someone who is penetrating a new universe. It is a kind of birth in reverse: a return from the adult world to childhood. The adult reality is replaced by childhood authenticity or the deterioration of the *Id* surrendering to sheer impulsive and instinctive activity. Sentences such as "a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that if you cut your finger VERY deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds" translate into nothing more than Dodgson's inability to accept his penis, and "'What a curious feeling!' said Alice; 'I must be shutting up like a telescope'" completes the castration. The lake of tears symbolizes the fear of a profuse menstruation that would break up the fragile bond between man and girl, and Alice quickly runs from that peril, seeking refuge among her animal friends (Dodgson's childhood friends) that rescue him from becoming a woman.

The authors also reveal that Carroll, against what has been considered for a long time, was neither a humorist nor someone who wrote a children's book; the truth is that this childish world is nothing more than his psychotic core and the only defense he found against the chaos of his instincts. Carroll seems to have influenced Lobo Antunes's earlier work. Without being too exhaustive, we should keep in mind that in the initial quotation from *Memória de elefante* there is a sentence taken from *Through the Looking Glass* and that the descent to hell in *Conhecimento do inferno* is very similar to Alice's fall. As a matter of fact, much in this novel and *Memória de elefante* reminds us of Carroll's universe.

The second article written by Lobo Antunes and Sampaio in 1980, whose title is "D. Duarte, or, Depression on the Throne," deals with King Duarte and the study of his book *Leal conselheiro*, a moral education volume, dating from 1435 to 1438, with a total of 103 chapters. This article suggests that the King might have suffered from manic-depressive psychosis, demonstrating this theory with the use of examples from his daily life and his family history as depicted in his book. There is an astonishing modernity in the phenomenological description done by D. Duarte about his deep sadness, together with his psychomotor inhibition, affective indifference, sense of guilt and suicidal ideation. There is even a chapter in *Leal conselheiro* dedicated to the melancholic mood, which provided the authors of the article with a major opportunity to describe the endogenous depression. They also reinforce that the therapies recommended to D. Duarte at the time are not so different

from the ones recommended nowadays.

The manic-depressive sign of D. Duarte seems to have several causes: genetic, psychological, physiological and so on, in such a way that he can be taken as a typical example of someone suffering from this kind of disorder. Everything in the personality of the King says so: difficulty in making decisions, permanent hesitation, jealousy of his brothers, and lack of imagination. As a retrospective diagnosis we can say that D. Duarte has suffered from bipolar manic-depressive psychosis, resulting in several seizures during his lifetime. His personality is shaped by cyclothymia, which is a recurring psychosis in which the patient has frequent mood swings between elation and depression, a condition that has affected all Portuguese kings since Count D. Henrique.

The third article under the same collaboration is called "Violência e relação terapêutica: os Hitlers de bolso no poder" ("Violence and the Therapeutic Relation: The Pocket Hitlers in Power") and dates from 1981. It is no longer about literary matters, being a study on the practise of psychiatry and attesting to the Freudian position of the authors. It is therefore relevant in order for us to understand its ideas and how they can be applied to Antunes's first novels.

The authors begin their article with some considerations on how medicine is still today anthropologically connected to ancient practices of magic and stress that the relationship between doctor and patient must be rendered an act of submission, thus allowing the patient to suffer all kinds of manipulation. The disease is seen as a sanction, a fault from the gods, to the dead, or society in general, or the disclosure of a taboo. So, the doctor is a kind of priest that determines the punishment or the expiation.

But if the doctor is a priest, the psychiatrist—who deals with mental disorders—is seen by the patient as someone who can read his thoughts, and know his misery and most intimate wishes. He plays the role of a genuine wizard, of a shaman possessed by magical powers. Nonetheless, most of his power is offered to him by his own patients, who want to see in him that entity and hope for a quick and magical solution for their problems. The psychiatrists come together in what can be called true tribes or churches of different shrines. We are in the presence of two parallel schizophrenic systems: one from the doctors and the other from the patients. The psychiatrist centers his power on several acts of violence: from the long hours he forces his patients to wait before receiving them, to the distance that he imposes between them, to the constant rush, to the lack of information granted to the patient, to the

violence of the diagnosis, and so on.

There are countless similarities between these thoughts and the way the character of the psychiatrist is depicted in the first novels of Lobo Antunes, in *Memória de elefante* and particularly in *Conhecimento do inferno*. In these novels the psychiatrist is also indifferent to the spectacle of pain: he is the executioner, the officer in the concentration camp, the SS officer, the castrator, the policeman, the "unfunny fool," "labeller of others' suffering," "deceiver of the brain," in an endless spiral that leads to doubt who is actually sane or mad. The psychiatric institution is the scene of the most repulsive filthiness and decrepitude; the therapies and diagnoses are described as inhuman and cabalistic; the patients as animals—dogs, pigs or birds—and psychiatry is "the art of cataloguing anguish" or simply "bullshit."

To finish, we have an article with the title "Contratransferência em Grupanálise" ("Countertransference in Group Analysis"), published in 1982. It is mainly centred on technical aspects of psychiatry, in particular on group analysis, which aims, according to the authors, to fulfill a lack of information on how the analyst lives his own work, what he does, how he interprets and does group analysis. We shall not enter into any further details connected with this article since it is somewhat technical and written for a specific audience, but we refer to it as a mere curiosity because it was produced based on the experience in group analysis of its authors.

We also know about the existence of another article, being in fact the first ever written by Lobo Antunes, together with Maria Inês S. Dias. This article is the result of a lecture presented at the Portuguese Society of Neurology and Psychiatry in 1974, to which this society has granted the Sandoz Prize. We are aware that this lecture follows the same reasoning as the article about Lewis Carroll, being however directed to the poet Ângelo de Lima. Unfortunately, in spite of all our joint efforts with the author himself, the several institutions and the people involved, it has been wholly impossible to find it. Still, we did not want to leave it overlooked.

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"You Don't Invent Anything": Memory and the Patterns of Fiction in Lobo Antunes's Works

Felipe Cammaert

Abstract: The main purpose of this article is to study the evolution of the concept of *fiction* through different stages of Lobo Antunes's writings. The argument stems from the idea that these stages are built on a structured logic of memory. Imagination, which is considered as the specificity that distinguishes fiction from history or facts, has a fundamental role in these "memory narratives." The article seeks to review the relationship between fiction, imagination, and memory in order to define the configuration of Antunes's fictional universe. The analysis of the fictional universe that is stated here suggests three principal variants: an autobiographical pattern; a polyphonic pattern; and a poetic pattern. As a result, the article hopes to achieve the distinction of fiction in the works of Lobo Antunes.

> [...] e então soltar os cães das palavras na esperança que alguma delas, vibrando a cauda de uma consonante alegre, vos descubra vivos [...]
>
> *Que farei quando tudo arde?*

When describing the arising of a fictional universe, the term *invention* identifies the foundational act accomplished by the writer to distinguish his work from other types of literature. Yet, for António Lobo Antunes's works, the creative process denotes a more complex procedure involving memory and its

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 267-89.
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correlation with imagination. As a result of this concern, the fictional status of his works is explored in this paper in order to define what can be understood as the configuration of fiction.

The study of Antunes's fictional works does not fit exactly with the predominant issues underlined by the multiple theories of fiction, concerned mainly with providing an answer to the question *What is fiction?* As a matter of fact, the significance of this author's works does not necessarily stand in their nature—that is to say, in the appreciation of whether their contents belong to a fictional world or to a historical or factual order; rather, it responds to the issue of the articulation of fiction itself. Lobo Antunes's works have unquestionably been considered as literary constructions, and more precisely as novels, in spite of the fact that they differentiate themselves in many aspects from the genre's traditional models.[1] Thus, this paper does not pretend to question the fictional status of Antunes's works (i.e., it does not attempt to answer the question: *are Lobo Antunes's works fictional?*), but to develop the issue of the *configuration of fiction* in his novels. What seems truly relevant at this time is to explore the different patterns of fiction in Lobo Antunes's works.

However, the common literary meaning of fiction points to an element that will appear fundamental for the analysis of Antunes's production. Fiction is often defined as the "narrative writing drawn from the imagination rather than from history or fact" (Harmon and Holman 195). Margaret Macdonald observes that this opposition between facts and fictions, identified with the opposition imaginary-reality, often leads to an ambiguous situation since it defines what is fictional as well as the work containing a fictional situation. However that may be, one can observe an established distinction based on the object of the narratives. This distinction places on one side the ones emerging from imagination, and on the other side the ones that materialize from recognized and verifiable events (facts). To achieve an analysis applied to the configuration of the different patterns in Lobo Antunes's works, the definition of fiction cited above must be confronted with the author's own perception of the act of writing.

1. Memory, Fiction and Imagination

The Antunian universe appears to be one of the most accurate examples of contemporary literature regarding the incidence of memory on the development of a fictional universe. Therefore, this examination of Lobo Antunes's configuration of fiction will proceed from a premise concerning the role of

memory in the building of the fictional field. The mnemonic nature that identifies the novels determines entirely his conception of fiction. Hence, memory is more than the inherent basis of any writing act; it is above all the principle that rules the disposition of events in the frameworks. Lobo Antunes's works could be considered "memory narratives," a category of fictional texts "[...] *that maintain a perfectly conventional narrative presentation but that follow an order determined not by biographical chronology but by associative memory,*" according to Dorrit Cohn's definition (182).

Memory plays a fundamental role when creating a fictional universe. All events employed to generate fiction derive from a mnemonic act. This assertion acquires a decisive significance in the case of Lobo Antunes's novels. The Portuguese author has been quite restrained when asked about the specificities of his writing process. However, in an interview with the Spanish journalist Maria Luisa Blanco, he states:

> pienso que todos los libros son autobiográficos, sobre todo *Robinson Crusoe* [...]. *Porque tú no inventas nada, la imaginación es la manera como arreglas tu memoria.* Todo tiene que ver con la memoria. [...] *Si no tienes memoria, no puedes tener imaginación.* Creo que la memoria no tiene que ver solamente con el pasado; también tiene que ver con el presente y quizá con el futuro. (109; italics added)[2]

Antunes's assertion involves a paradox that can be named, for the purposes of this study, "the mnemonic paradox." This concept suggests that the imaginative faculty, applied to the production of a work of fiction, draws solely from mnemonic activities. Hence the literary distinction between facts and fiction is clearly undermined. Imagination no longer determines the fictional quality of a text, but it is now associated to the individual perception of past time.[3] The mnemonic paradox illustrates the key role assumed by memory in the definition of fiction: for Lobo Antunes, all the imaginary events that build his texts not only involve an implied memory action, but also refer explicitly to the writer's own past. Invention, which is considered as the intellectual process that gives birth to fictions, is thus only possible in terms of remembering past actions.

This paper seeks to review different patterns of fiction throughout Antunes's literary career. The core idea shows that the configuration of fiction transforms itself as the novels' production grows, despite the fact that one could not reasonably identify clear periods in the writer's production. As Maria Alzira Seixo argues:

> É difícil estabelecer fases na obra de Lobo Antunes, ainda neste início da segunda década das suas publicações, não só porque cada um dos seus romances emerge isoladamente como um mundo específico e coeso, mas também porque, em compensação, todos os seus livros apresentam elos que os ligam entre si, seja pela concepção da vida, seja por um conjunto de atitudes estilísticas, seja ainda por problemáticas e ambientes que de um para outro migram ou se mantêm. (195)

Although Seixo proposes a thematic classification, she recognizes that this one is susceptible to fluctuate depending on the chosen approach. As an alternative for the study of the distinction of fiction, it seems preferable to concentrate on the permanent patterns of fiction that emerge from the works. Those patterns reflect somehow the major steps of the Antunian narrative progression, without being strictly attached to a chronological order. They can be described as follows.

The first pattern is the *autobiographical fiction*, in which narration is seen as the quest of a voice to deal with the personal remembrances of the author, particularly the ones referring to the Angolan independence war and the conditions of the psychiatric practice in Portugal.[4] The autobiographical fiction is particularly visible in the first works of the author, namely *Memória de elefante* (1979), *Os cus de Judas* (1979, translated as *South of Nowhere*) and *Conhecimento do inferno* (1980). Other texts such as *Fado alexandrino* (1983) and *Auto dos danados* (1985, *Act of the Damned*) could also be mentioned as novels developing an autobiographical fiction, but due to their composite structure they rather symbolize the evolution period that will lead to the next pattern.

The second variant of fiction, described here as *polyphonic fiction*, corresponds to a period of writing defined by the maturity of its narrative techniques. In this period, the framework constructs itself by the accumulation of a multiplicity of narrative voices. Five novels can be included here: *A ordem natural das coisas* (1992, *The Natural Order of Things*), *A morte de Carlos Gardel* (1994), *O manual dos inquisidores* (1996, *The Inquisitors' Manual*), *O esplendor de Portugal* (1997) and *Exortação aos crocodilos* (1998). The consolidation of the polyphonic fiction is accomplished progressively, but as time passes there is an extension of the viewpoints, which leads to an enhancement of the plot, and which will end up with the instauration of a situation in which a broad spectrum of voices cohabitates to define the fictional universe.

The third pattern, *poetic fiction*, is achieved by superposing the structural challenges brought by autobiographical and polyphonic narration. The pattern

illustrates the independence that the narrators have reached within the fiction in the previous period. Antunes's last two novels, *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura*, published in 2000, and *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, published in 2001, develop the poetic fiction.[5] As a consequence of the polyphonic situation, the internal link between the author and the narrator appears destabilized because the latter tends to play the role normally attributed to his creator.

The study of the three narrative features mentioned above stems from the idea that, throughout Antunes's career, fictional activity fluctuates between the author's consciousness and the character-narrators created by him. This is a direct consequence of the importance given to memory in the constitution of the fictional universe. As a result, in the autobiographical pattern, the creation of fiction corresponds to the author himself (even if it is all about an authorial representation inside the plot). In the polyphonic fiction, however, the characters develop an individual discourse from where the past emerges (although, strictly speaking, the author is still in command). As for the poetic fiction, there is a confusion of entities regarding the creation of fiction as a result of the preponderant role of the characters issued from the polyphonic pattern (thus, the fictive character behaves as if he were the author). Moreover, due to the complexity to intend a detailed "history of fiction," the emphasis will be made on the major mutations of the act of invention as it appears in the mnemonic paradox. In other words, the considerations of the multiple figures of invention and its consequent effects on fiction require one to answer the following question: *who is the producer of fiction?*

Along with these observations of the multiple patterns of fiction, the question of factuality also emerges. As the mnemonic paradox states, imagination, which is conceived of as the source of fiction, only comes from the ordering of memory. At that moment, one can guess that the facts brought back by memory will have to be subject to radical transformations to accomplish their inventive role of creating fiction. Thus, in the same way that Lobo Antunes's works evolve, the referential autobiographical universe acquires a progressively more fictional dimension, which conversely will never underestimate the significance of memory.

2. Autobiographical Fiction: Fictionalization of the Past

António Lobo Antunes's first novels are undeniably marked by an autobiographical trait. The major themes of this period are Portugal's contemporary history (the fall of dictatorship, as well as the independence wars of the African

Portuguese colonies) and the conflicts of the psychiatric world. Both themes occupy a foremost place in Antunes's life, as he draws from his personal experience as a medical soldier in the Angolan war, and his early career years as a psychiatrist in Lisbon. Writing therefore seems to accomplish a cathartic role in the author's life.[6]

In spite of the important autobiographical contents of his early prose, one cannot forget the distinction, nowadays common in literature, between the author and the narrator: António Lobo Antunes is definitely not the *narrator* of these novels, he is just the *author*. As such, the narrator put in place by Antunes bears many resemblances to the author. The fictional narrator, modeled in the image of his creator, brings to the fictional world some of the events that belong to Lobo Antunes' own past. This procedure constitutes in and of itself an act of fiction. Within this context, Margit Sutrop argues:

> we are able to recognize that a text counts as fiction if we notice that the narrator is not identical with the author, that the latter is only playing a part of a narrator. To play a part of somebody else, one has to imagine being this person. Reporting on the events that he imagines knowing about, the author imagines being the person who has this knowledge. Hence, performing fictional speech acts the author is expressing his imagination. (128)

The first trace of imagination appears with the creation of fictional characters who will show up in a fictional world and transpose the author's perceptions of past events. Even if the Antunian narrator imagined by the author is particularly attentive to his creators' effective past, the fictional situation compels the surviving memories to be forecast into the plot.

Thus, the novels belonging to the autobiographical feature present a high degree of imagination according to the mnemonic paradox, given that the assembling of fictional situations comes from the ordering of memory. The process of invention can be then seen as the fictionalization of the past. However, this act of fictionalization reflects the willingness to elaborate a narrative situation according to a mnemonic rhythm rather than a chronological arrangement. Events will then be brought into fiction as they survive in the author's consciousness, conserving the simultaneity and the apparent lack of logic they possess before passing through the filter of rational language. Maria Alzira Seixo, studying the narrative structure of *South of Nowhere*, refers to a situation where an effect of anguish is produced in the reader due to "o

modo de leitura, quase em simultâneo dos vários planos da memória e do presente, e da situação enunciativa que se vai através deles pulverizando em fragmentações da memória ao mesmo tempo que se recolhe e reencontra em versões niilistas nesse vazio dos corpos e das palavras" (55). In this sense, the kind of invention one can find inside the autobiographical pattern involves the act of transposing personal thoughts to the fictional universe with no loss whatsoever of their mnemonic presentation. Hence, the ruling principle of the memory narratives defined by Dorrit Cohn remains intact.

Additionally, the Antunian action of transforming his memories into literature reveals the search of a narrative voice to accomplish this act in the best possible way. The fictionalization of past events remains evident, in spite of the fact that the autobiographical pattern oscillates between a first-person and a third-person narrative order. The autobiographical quality depends more on the contents of the narration than on the form chosen to describe it. As Maria Alzira Seixo points out, "os romances narrados numa primeira pessoa factualmente muito próxima da personalidade do autor António Lobo Antunes não estão mais próximos da autobiografia (nem menos) do que os que se lhe seguem" (485). However, one could suppose that the first-person structure articulates more accurately the author's wish to transpose into the fictional world his deepest feelings that, after all, constitute the foundation of the writing act.

Memória de elefante, the first novel to be published in 1979, can be seen as the interior conflict of the author to express, through the narrator's speech, his personal universe. There is a third-person narrator who is constantly "interrupted" by a first-person narrator. This variation of the traditional narrative mode occurs systematically when the narration tends to describe a hurting memory. In one of the passages of the novel, the narrator, a psychiatrist, argues with a colleague who regrets the loss of the African colonies. The third-person narrator reveals the irritation of the psychiatrist, who had endured the conflict in Angola. As the anger grows in the psychiatrist's mind, the narration switches progressively into a first-person confession:

> Que sabe este tipo de África, *interrogou-se* o psiquiatra à medida que o outro, padeira de Aljubarrota do patriotismo à Legião, se afastava em gritinhos indignados [...] *que sei eu* que durante vinte e sete meses *morei* na angústia do arame farpado por conta das multinacionais, *vi* a minha mulher a quase morrer do falciparum, *assisti* ao vagaroso fluir do Dondo, *fiz* uma filha na Malanje dos diamantes, *contornei* os morros nus de Dala-Samba povoados no topo pelos tufos de palmeiras

> dos túmulos dos reis Gingas, *parti* e *regressei* com a casca de um uniforme imposta no corpo, *que sei eu* de África? (42-44; italics added)

It all happens as if the third-person narrator did not have the authority to stop the character's speech from exceeding the principles of the direct discourse. The sudden appearance of first-person narrations in the text symbolizes the author's impossibility to maintain his distance from the third-person narrative form. This is especially true when dealing with personally painful, sensitive memories. Thus, the emergence of a first-person narrator symbolizes the irruption of the mnemonic present on the logic of narration, as well as the inclusion of the author's intimacy in the fictional sphere.

In *Os cus de Judas* [*South of Nowhere*], the first-person narrator monopolizes the use of speech in spite of the presence of an interlocutor participating in the scene, which denies at once the hypothesis of a monologue. The novel can be seen as a touching and intimate declaration from a narrator who seeks desperately to purge the memories of the Angolan war, along with his loneliness and despair. He does this by confessing his intimacies to a woman in a bar. Here is the incipit of chapter I:

> Porque camandro é que não se fala nisto? Começo a pensar que o milhão e quinhentos mil homens que passaram por África não existiram nunca e lhe estou contando uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar, uma história inventada com que a comovo a fim de conseguir mais depressa (um terço de paleio, um terço de álcool, um terço de ternura, sabe como é?) que você veja nascer comigo a manhã na claridade azul pálida que fura as persianas e sobe dos lençóis, revela a curva adormecida de uma nádega, um perfil de bruços no colchão, os nossos corpos confundidos num torpor sem mistério. (79)[7]

The woman's voice remains unknown, buried by the narrator's speech. Her questions are submerged by the "almighty narrator," who goes over them "in a loud voice" to remind the reader that there is a second, yet silent, character within the plot. The fact that the reader only knows about the woman's voice through the allusions of the narrator creates a particular situation in terms of the fictional universe, since the former tends to fill the vacuum left by the latter (i.e., the absent woman). As a result, one can expect an indirect form of dialogue between the author and the reader, in which the autobiographical pattern is transmitted within a fictional atmosphere. By placing the reader in

the seat of the seduced woman, Lobo Antunes intends to persuade him about the sincerity of his assertions while complaining about the dreadful reality of the colonial wars. Moreover, the allusion to the cheap, implausible novel ("uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar") consolidates the idea of an imaginary conversation between the reader and the author, since the narrator's speech can be identified with the author's writing act.

A deliberate use of first-person narration also serves as a constant reminder of the close relationship between the narrative and factual worlds. This is what Michal Glowinski calls "formal mimetics":

> The first-person narration [...] is the domain of *formal mimetics*: an imitation, by means of a given form, of other forms of literary, paraliterary, and extraliterary discourse, as well as—what is a common enough phenomenon—ordinary language. It is a form of appeal resorting to the socially fixed norms of expression, usually firmly rooted in a given culture. (106)

In a movement that supposes a constant actualization of the different stages of memory, the facts belonging to the narrator's memory are represented in fiction as closely as they occurred in the author's own mind. This is seen in the autobiographical fiction, where the mnemonic nature of Antunes's writing is actually strengthened. Invention therefore corresponds to the fictionalization of past events in terms of the mnemonic paradox, conceiving imagination as the arrangement of memory.

3. Polyphonic Fiction: Mnemonic Invention Transferred to the Characters' Minds

It is possible to identify a clear evolution in the narration of Lobo Antunes from a wholly personal narration to a shared narration that includes multiple viewpoints, which tend to consolidate in the polyphonic pattern. This progression passes however through a period where novels are structured around a third-narrator plot, as in the cases of *An Explanation of the Birds* (1981), *Fado Alexandrino* (1983), and *The Act of the Damned* (1985). Bit by bit, Antunes's production broadens the narrative perspective, presenting thus many narrators that appear in the story to tell their memories.[8] As Maria Alzira Seixo suggests (147), it is all about an evolution, from a multiplication of viewpoints to a multiplicity of voices. Hence, first-person narration establishes itself progressively in the text, and introduces the interaction of a wide range of characters that occupy the space left behind by the autobiographical narrator.

One can therefore observe the consolidation of a polyphonic situation, analogous to the one stated in Bakhtin's interpretation of Dostoevsky's works, and defined as follows:

> A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event." (Bakhtin, *Problems* 6)

What appears to be distinctive in the Portuguese universe compared to the Russian one is the plurality of narrators constituting many voices that conclude in a polyphonic configuration of the novel. The polyphonic fiction sets up a situation in which the novel's entire framework is the result of the addition of all first-person discourses; each narrator develops a personal mnemonic universe from which he or she digs out the remembrances that end up building the fiction.

Opposed to the autobiographical narrator, the polyphonic narrator (both individually considered and as a whole, as the sum of narrators) clearly leaves behind the author's referential universe. In that sense, one could say that the polyphonic fiction reflects a more fictional (and fictive) referent than the autobiographical fiction: memories brought up by the polyphonic narrator do not openly correspond to the author's own memories, which seem to vanish dimly. Therefore, little by little, the experiences of the author leave the scene and allow other consciences to grow progressively. Characters start to conquer their own "independence" as products of fiction. Nevertheless, the autobiographical narrator remains as fictional as the polyphonic narrator: the only difference being the purely fictional, non-referential nature of the second pattern. Alternatively, the factual events lived by Antunes form the source of fiction in the autobiographical situation.

Regarding the mnemonic paradox developed and confirmed in the autobiographical pattern, there is a transfer of the inventing faculty from the author's own memory to the character-narrator's fictional memory. As a matter of fact, one can argue that any direct references to the factual world disappear while giving place to a fictional world enclosed inside the character's memories. Invention, which can be seen as the source of imagination, is now located in

the character's consciousness as the polyphonic principle proposed by Bakhtin suggests.

The significant modifications suffered by the mnemonic paradox can be explained by the difference between author and narrator. What really occurs in the polyphonic pattern is that the author imagines being a character subjected to a different factual reality (strictly speaking "fictional," but nevertheless presented for the meanings of the novel as "real"), that is to say, a character possessing an individual memory. Due to this act of imagination, the author's own personal and real memory tends to hide behind the character's imaginative memory. This fictional representation of the author is tied to the fact that the characters take possession of the first-person narration. This could suggest that the author's consciousness is somehow relegated to the background. Yet one cannot underestimate that Lobo Antunes remains at the commencement of the imaginative act that gave birth to the character accomplishing a mnemonic act. Sutrop, arguing against Käte Hamburger's well-known theory which excludes the first-person narration from the fictional domain, states:

> If we define fiction as an expression of the author's imagination, we will be able to bring first-person narratives back to the category of fiction. [In first-person and third-person narratives] the author does not tell us what he believes or knows but what he imagines to believe. The only difference is that the author of a first-person narrative imagines being the narrator = character, i.e. he imagines having the beliefs of a concrete character who participates in the events of the story. (129)

After all, the constitution of a polyphonic narration implies a second act of imagination even greater than the one produced by the author in the autobiographical situation to represent himself as a fictional character. The question will then be if this act, which hands over the mnemonic faculty to the character in order to create fiction, concerns in some way the author's memory. The latter impasse can be solved by considering the issue of the point of view, applied to Antunes's polyphonic configuration.

One can notice that, in the polyphonic pattern, the author's consciousness remains perceptible in spite of the undermining of the autobiographical dimension inside the fiction. Thus, the coexistence of a variety of first-person narrators in the actual pattern can be fairly accepted if one presupposes the involvement of an omnipresent consciousness, whose main role is to assemble the character's narratives in order to produce the text of fiction. This situation

materializes in the novels by the narrative technique of the *inquiry*, dear to the author. Antunes imagines a narrative situation where he (to be precise, a fictional representation of himself) dialogues with his fictional characters: fiction emerges as a consequence of this action, leading to a third act of imagination which is derived from the second act of imagination that introduced the polyphonic situation. This symbolic conversation between the author and his characters clearly reminds one of the "dialogic imagination" phenomenon underlined by Bakhtin, resulting from the polyphonic nature of the novel.

Maria Alzira Seixo underlines in her study of Lobo Antunes's novels the existence of several situations in which inquiry plays a major role. Hence, in *An Explanation of the Birds*, she discovers that "o inquérito aparece não no sentido da indagação ou da pesquisa, mas no sentido do depoimento, da manifestação de opiniões e, no fundo, do falatório e da má-língua do mundo" (103), whereas in *Act of the Damned* the narration "é de vez em quando referida como um relato feito por solicitação ou encomenda, que o título neste caso pode relacionar com uma acção judicial" (154). However that may be, the author's inquiries induce the characters' discourse to develop within the plot.

Referring to *The Inquisitor' Manual*, the critic argues that the inquiry develops between the interrogation of the story (of history, in his instance) and the judicial investigation. In this novel, one can infer from the indications given by the characters that behind their discourse there is a silent interlocutor transcribing the speeches of each narrator.[9] This interlocutor can be seen as the true, yet mute, narrator of the novel. In *The Inquisitors' Manual*, the silent interlocutor is from time to time unmasked by the narrator's speech, as occurs in this relevant extract:

> confesso-lhe que ignoro por completo do que está a falar, não percebo nada dessa história de Salazares e Estado Novo e ministros e namoradas de ministros nas ruas Castilhos [...] não entendo que interesse possa ter para um livro a maneira de pensar de um furriel de trinta anos acabado de chegar de cabo [...] em lugar de falarmos não quer antes que lhe traga uma cadeira e um guarda-sol de praia para gozarmos a tarde, ouvem-se os pavões da mata, nem precisamos de falar, e no momento em que o escuro impedir de nos distinguirmos um ao outro você mete os seus papéis e as suas gravações na pasta que não há utilidade em desenterrar o passado e desampara-me a loja sem fazer perguntas, esquece tudo e nunca me viu na vida, deixe o Salazar que já bateu a bota em descanso, deixe o ministro que apodrece por aí num hospital qualquer em descanso. (345-46)

Here, the hidden consciousness is openly presented as someone who inquires in order to compose a book. The inquirer (who could be called, for instance, "the inquisitor," considering the character's reaction to the questions) plays in some way an opposite role to the one held by the woman in *Os cus de Judas*: the two silent individuals exist within the plot to act as a balance to the ubiquitous self in the use of speech. Furthermore, by imagining an inquiring hypothesis, Lobo Antunes may as well insinuate a mimetic situation based on a psychiatric interview, similar to the ones conducted by the author when he worked as a psychiatrist. However, the narrative technique of the inquiry reveals an autobiographical aspect which is firmly anchored in the polyphonic pattern, but nevertheless obscured by the proliferation of fictional voices.

As for the rest of the polyphonic situations that do not explicitly recreate the illusion of a fictional encounter between the author-character and the narrator-character, one could advance the hypothesis that the inquiry situation remains implied because of the narrative structure represented. By giving the right of speech to a broad number of characters, all of whom are first-person narrators who tell their memories "aloud," Antunes places himself as the receptor of these intimate confessions, and thus appears as being the entity that ties together this panoply of voices. As a result, the reader plays the role of a true spectator who assists in a dialogue between the author and the characters. However, due to the muteness of the author, the reader tends to occupy provisionally the vacant place left by the author-inquirer. As Michal Glowinski argues:

> In various types of the first-person tale, different elements are accentuated: at times it is the personality of the speaker, at times his position at the moment of utterance. Yet wherever the accents occur, they always constitute the essential distinction. Their effacement causes the first-person narration to lose its basic distinctive features and begin, necessarily, to resemble the third-person story. Thus, we can say that, entangled in its kind of dependence, *a first-person narration becomes somewhat similar to a dialogue in the presence of the reader. He is in possession not only of the narrative text, but also, so to speak, involved in the very act of creating and transmitting the story.* (110; italics added)

In a sense, because of his voiceless but essential duty, the silent interlocutor of a polyphonic situation (both the implied, and the explicitly enounced) plays the part of a traditional third-person narrator. His personality and position,

when putting together the different narrators at his service, remain unnoticeable most of the time. The multiplication of the points of view increases the imaginative sphere, obliging the true narrator of this plural world to act as the conductor of a symphonic patchwork of voices.

By transferring the narrative function to his characters, Lobo Antunes accomplishes two actions: first, he allows the emergence of the character's memory which, based on the mnemonic model, will produce fiction. Secondly, he ensures his presence by imagining a fictive dialogical situation between himself and the characters. The polyphonic pattern turns out, after all, to be the quest of a voice to express the contents of memory. The hesitations between the first- and third-person narratives, which appeared in the early novels of Lobo Antunes, somehow remain valid. The alternative of a multiplicity of first-person narrators is then justified by the author's necessity to create a fictional mnemonic atmosphere richer than his autobiographical experience.

4. Poetic Fiction: The Characters in the Role of the Author

The third pattern also answers to the issue of the many representations shown by the Antunian narrative voice. However, at this point the concern does not truly lie in the observation of the multiplicity of viewpoints, but rather in the "aptitude" of the character to create fiction. After ten years of polyphonic creation, Lobo Antunes's characters seem to have reached a remarkable "fictional independence." By taking advantage of this, the author then proceeds to elaborate a profound interrogation of the meaning of fiction, and at the same time of the essential act of writing.

From the observation of the two last novels published by Lobo Antunes, one can notice that the limits between characters and author have undeniably started to fade away. Although there is still a fictional framework to which the events narrated refer, there are also a significant number of indications alluding to the appropriation of the author's functions by the character-narrators themselves. As a consequence, the whole issue of genre is brought back into question.

In *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura*, two elements point to this narrative's unsteady situation. In spite of the multiplicity of voices that emerge within her discourse, Maria Clara appears to be the main character and the only true narrator of the text. She keeps a personal diary, and whatever is written in it is referred to in the novel in the same way as the rest of the events that make up the story. Besides, Maria Clara's impressions are, most of the time,

opposed to the story's sequence. As Seixo argues (392), the father's death, which is one of the major events developed by Maria Clara, can be considered as information coming exclusively from her imagination. The reason for this is that the general plot does not provide the arguments to verify its validity.[10]

Therefore, *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura* contemplates a double-level framework: there is a second fiction within the main fiction. The two levels of fiction fuse constantly, it being frequently impossible for the reader to detach the events belonging to one or the other. Moreover, the fact that Maria Clara's relatives participate in the development of the story, either by using their own speech or by writing some chapters of her personal diary, contributes to strengthen the impression of a double plot. Actually, they can also be seen as the characters of Maria Clara's own fictional universe. The dynamic contribution of Maria Clara to the progression of the framework, which is materialized in her writing act, also denotes that the character embraces the role of the author regarding the construction of a fictional universe. The former imitates the latter in the imagination of fictive characters and its subsequent confrontation with their fictional discourse. Hence, Maria Clara constantly interacts with an imaginary character whose name is Leopoldina, and she is unable to state whether her "friend" is real or just a simple emanation of her personal diary.

In *Que farei quando tudo arde?,* the vanishing of the distance separating the author from his creatures can be seen as a query of the self. Paulo Antunes Lima, the main character, is a young drug addict undergoing the disintegration of his family life: his father is a transvestite who abandons his wife and son, and his mother turns alcoholic while despairing over the absence of her husband. Yet, throughout the novel, Paulo insists on having his name changed to *António*. Within the plot's logic, this last modification is a direct consequence of his father's change of name, from Carlos to Soraia. Maria Alzira Seixo suggests that, unlike in previous novels, in this case the coincidence of the character's name with the author's own name involves a certain degree of "simulation," given that the doubt about the character's real name persists throughout the novel (449-50). Thus, *Que farei quando tudo arde?* brilliantly develops the never-ending ambiguity of all first-person narrations concerning the individualization of the narrative voice and its correspondence with the author's own consciousness.

This shared identity concerning the first name is clearly developed inside the book. In a crucial chapter, Paulo, who is struggling against the oblivion of

his dead father's memory, decides to pay God, who lives in a decayed attic of a hotel surrounded by pigeons, a visit (329-70).[11] Thus, Paulo questions the divinity about his father, but God cannot remember him ("—Vocês são tantos garoto," he replies), nor find him within the city pictured through the tiled roof's holes. Paulo is then obliged to refresh God's memory ("ginasticar-lhe a memória") by alluding to his father's sexual behavior ("um maricas Senhor, um travesti, um palhaço que o Filho perdoou em Vosso santo nome"), seeking to confirm that his real name is Carlos and not Soraia. At the end of the chapter, God finally pronounces the name "Carlos," impelled by Paulo's desire. The narrative function is momentarily shared by both Paulo and God. As a result of this "narrative partnership," God/Paulo impede Carlos from abandoning his wife and children, thus modifying a fact reiterated many times throughout the story. In Paulo's consciousness, one of his major fears is then erased from memory. One can infer that the peculiar encounter held by the narrator with the Supreme Creator connotes a metaphoric dialog between the two entities. The author, hilariously personified by God, is hailed by one of his characters, so he can somehow modify the issue of the story. Besides, God's name, Mister Lemos, can be considered as an anagram related to the literary activity: *Lemos* could then mean in Portuguese "what we are reading,"—*"o que estamos a ler,"* as Maria Alzira Seixo has underscored (437).

The intrusion of the character in the author's universe involves, in a sense, an inversion of the inquiry's technique as it has been stated for the polyphonic pattern. In spite of the fact that the poetic fictions continue to recreate a form of inquiry which is similar to the one typified in *The Inquisitors' Manual*, one can observe that there is an inversion of roles in situations where the characters query the act of producing fiction: the inquirer of the fictional field (the fictionalized representation of the author) ends up being a respondent, whereas the fictional character ends up leading the quest.[12]

Therefore, this proximity between characters and author (in his fundamental role of composer of fictions) suggests a renewed autobiographical relationship that introduces a reinterpretation of the mnemonic paradox. The autobiographical pattern is revisited, once one observes that the Antunian characters question their creator about his writing activities rather than his personal memories. Thus, what is really brought into play here is, once more, the act of invention. Given that in accordance with the mnemonic paradox all invention proceeds from the ordering of memory, the fusion of entities studied above confirms the predominance of the author's memory in the creation

of fiction. Whereas in the first pattern the autobiographical nature of fiction was a result of the fictionalizing of factual events, in the poetic pattern it is about the representation of the character in the factual dimension, in order to act as the creator of fiction. In a sense, through his characters' questioning of the genre, Lobo Antunes questions himself and his role as a writer. However that may be, the dialogical situation stated for the polyphonic fiction ends up being confidently enhanced.

This final pattern underlying the configuration of Antunes's fictional universe proves to be poetic, not only because of the imaging connotation of language that presents many traits of the poetic genre, but mostly because of the profound query of the act of writing developed presently. By placing his characters into the role of creators of fiction, Lobo Antunes somehow challenges the principles that rule any literary activity involving an act of creation. The mnemonic paradox has suffered in effect a radical transformation since its first variant, the autobiographical fiction, but nevertheless remains valid. Thus, the inventive attribute of imagination refers more to the mnemonic function of producing fiction itself than to the act of transposing the author's own past to a fictional situation.

Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura denotes this ontological interrogation since it is presented as a poem, in spite of its remarkable length.[13] The poetical consonance of the title evokes a wide variety of interpretations that can be drawn from the novel, since the "dark night" connotes a lyrical characterization of the art of fiction. In this sense, Seixo's analysis of the concept of night reveals some of the possibilities that can be proposed: the Antunian dark night could then imply the act of writing, the text that the reader has in his or her hands, the emerging of the past, as well as the main reason to write to push away the darkness of silence (396-98). In consequence, the novel reveals itself to be a book about creation, somehow referring to the Book of Genesis that tells the origins of the world and that at the same time introduces each one of the seven parts of Antunes's novel. Writing could then be considered as the only possible answer for Maria Clara, if not to avoid the coming of the dark night, at least to delay her plunging into the shadows, as long as the fiction lasts.

In an overwhelmingly imaginative chapter of *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, Paulo accomplishes an act of writing within the fiction (457-75). Even if Paulo's notes do not integrate the fiction with the same frequency as Maria Clara's personal diary, his actions become somehow a clear metaphor of the author's art of writing by their significance and poetic dimension. This chapter, having

far too many relevant passages to be quoted extensively, can be approached from a dual perspective: one could imagine that Lobo Antunes expresses his beliefs about composing fiction through the narrator's assertions, or in other words, by using Paulo's descriptions of his notebook. As a result, Paulo writes in a notebook to bring to mind his entourage as if it were the author's construction of the plot: "é a única forma que tenho de tentar encontrar-vos [...] e então soltar os cães das palavras na esperança que alguma de elas, vibrando a cauda de uma consoante alegre, vos descubra vivos" (457).

He would like to get closer to his father ("se lograsse conhecê-lo por intermédio do caderno com a mesma nitidez com que lhe noto as joiazinhas de vidro" [466]), but the words seem to have their own life ("as sílabas que não me obedecem, trazem à tona episódios e pessoas que sepultam de novo, enganam-se ao oferecerem-me recordações que não são minhas [459]), and behave like wild beasts ("as palavras [...] filando-me a manga com pontos de exclamação de incisivos, pontos de suspensão de molares, o til do contorno dos lábios" [468]). The character, like his creator, is aware of the magic of words to evoke reality ("no caso de procurar o rafeiro do laçarote escrevê-lo às escondidas [...] completar uma das patas para o impedir de coxear" [462] "e logo que escrevo / moscas / as moscas ali, se pudesse não escrever" [464]). For a short time, the author's voice manages to monopolize the narration by the autobiographical confession ("eu a aproximar o nariz do papel buscando-vos submersas nas linhas, uma vozita débil / —Paulo / que penso reconhecer a pesar dos caprichos da memória que distorce e apaga, da surdez que me apoquenta" [458]) relegating the character to the background. Finally, Paulo and Lobo Antunes give the impression to be conscious of the mnemonic dimension of writing ("este caderno onde o passado se torna presente e me persegue, me sufoca" [472]). In a unique example of the relationship he entertains with his characters and with the literary work, Antunes's humoristic variation on the theme of writing abolishes all the obstacles imposed by fictional logic.

Thus, the two novels' subject of the poetic pattern can be summarized in a single word: writing. Writing is on the one hand the solution to prevent the narrator, and furthermore the author, from the hazard of emerging into the dark night, and to give them confidence when everything burns around them. Writing suggests, on the other hand, the mnemonic activity questioned by both the character and the author in the poetic fiction. One could suggest that the reason why the mnemonic paradox is still applicable to Antunes's fiction is that the author's consciousness has continuously been occupied by

his characters, constituting an immediate memory from which the invention emerges when producing fiction. According to the mnemonic principle, the author's fictional imagination would then issue from the fictive minds he has created throughout the years, and whose invented memories somehow reflect his perception of the world. In this sense, Seixo observes the existence of a variety of autobiographies in Lobo Antunes's works:

> Deste modo, é como se houvesse *várias* autobiografias nesta obra, umas coincidentes com a personalidade do escritor ou com a de entidades que com ele se cruzaram, outras coincidindo, e talvez que mais corporeamente ainda, com entidades que são predominantemente projecções do pensamento, criações ficcionais embutidas num olhar fixado na experiência que o romancista colheu na observação e no contacto. (496)

The factual and fictional autobiographies revealed by Seixo happen to be nothing other than the three patterns of fiction underlined in the present study. Hence the poetic pattern of fiction turns up to be a profound interrogation of the writing process accomplished by the author through the characters' perspective. This questioning would never be possible if the fictional voices did not truly reveal the deepest figures of the author's consciousness.

From the study of the three fictional patterns in Lobo Antunes's works, one can conclude that the configuration of fiction is intimately linked to the multiple materializations of memory that appear in all the author's novels. In other words, the factual universe emerges from the fictionalization of past events in accordance with a narrative presentation ruled by an intense mnemonic order.

As a result, the mnemonic paradox stated here appears to be the fundamental principle that rules the configuration of fiction in the different stages of the Antunian production. Given that the imaginative faculty draws entirely from the mnemonic configuration, the fictional universe is associated at all times with the ordering of memory. However, the act of invention undergoes many transformations resulting from its fundamental role within the mnemonic paradox. One can notice that the mnemonic imagination describes a metaphoric circular itinerary, which can be illustrated as follows: in the autobiographical fiction the imaginative faculty is placed in the author's own consciousness, whereas in the polyphonic fiction it lies within the character's consciousness. As for the poetic fiction, the imaginative mnemonic act ends

up being positioned once more in the author's consciousness, yet is referred to the activity of writing rather than to his personal experiences.

Thus, the figurative itinerary followed by the author's imagination happens to be nothing more than the true quest for a narrative voice inside the fictional universe, capable of expressing a rich intimate dimension via literary language. Ultimately, one can conclude that whether Lobo Antunes's first novels appear as an interrogation of the potentialities of fiction to reflect his deepest memories, his latest works question the fictional universe to find out the essential meaning of the act of writing. In addition, the polyphonic fiction proves to be the most accomplished example of Antunes's imaginative talent to multiply the mnemonic sources of fiction with no loss whatsoever of the autobiographical factors. Regardless of the pattern evidenced, what seems to be fundamental is the fact that Lobo Antunes's approach constantly questions the role of the author in the invention of a fictional world.

Furthermore, the Antunian configuration of fiction confers a key role to the reader. In all three patterns, the reader is somehow confronted by the author's perspective, as he feels occasionally concerned by the first-person discourse of the characters. Due to the mnemonic nature attributed to the act of invention, the reader will then have to consider various degrees of the autobiographical narration within the fictional plot to take over the facts narrated. Lobo Antunes conceives the relationship between the author and the reader as a close journey into the depths of the human soul. In a revealing chronicle, which would deserve to be quoted extensively, he confesses his devotion to the reader:

> A verdadeira aventura que proponho é aquela que o narrador e o leitor fazem em conjunto ao negrume do inconsciente, à raiz da natureza humana. [...] Exijo que o leitor tenha uma voz entre as vozes do romance / ou poema, ou visão; ou outro nome que lhes apeteça dar / a fim de poder ter assento no meio dos demónios e dos anjos da terra. [...] Reparem como as figuras que povoam o que digo não são descritas e quase não possuem relevo: é que se trata de vocês mesmos. Disse em tempos que o livro ideal seria aquele em que todas as páginas fossem espelhos: reflectem-me a mim e ao leitor, até nenhum de nós saber qual dos dois somos. Tento que cada um seja ambos e regressemos desses espelhos como quem regressa da caverna do que era. É a única salvação que conheço e, ainda conhecesse outras, a única que me interessa. (*Segundo livro* 109-11)

One can therefore observe that the fictional model proposed by Antunes undeniably considers the reader as a fundamental element for the completion of the text's intentions. The author declares thus his sincere writing commitment to the readers by letting them identify with the characters, and above all, by hoping to eliminate the genre's distance that exists between the author and the person who has the novel in his hands.

Finally, it seems important to remember that the literary distinction between fact and fiction, based on the imaginative faculty commonly accorded to the fictional field, cannot be thoroughly applied in the works of Lobo Antunes. As a matter of fact, in the Antunian fictional universe, these two poles endure a never-ending confusion due to the mnemonic role that is reserved to imagination. After all, the three patterns of fiction studied here confirm entirely the author's affirmation related to the impossibility of the invention of a fictional world. António Lobo Antunes's novels are somehow consistent with the opinion he once declared: "you don't invent anything, imagination is the way you arrange your memory."

Notes

[1] Further on, the case of *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura* (2000) and its genre duality between poem or novel will be examined (see section 4 of this article, "Poetic Fiction: The Characters in the Role of the Author").

[2] This is the Portuguese translation, as given by Carlos Aboim de Brito: "penso que todos os livros são autobiográficos, sobretudo *Robinson Crusoé* [...]. *Porque não se inventa nada, a imaginação é a maneira como se arruma a memória.* Tudo tem a ver com a memória. [...] *Se não temos memória, não podemos ter imaginação.* Creio que a memória não tem apenas a ver com o passado; também tem a ver com o presente e talvez com o futuro" (Blanco 114; italics added).

[3] William James defines memory as "the association of a present image with others known to belong to the past" (598).

[4] The term *voice* is understood here in the same way as Genette's definition of *voix narrative*, which is "used to describe the way the narrative situation, along with the narrator and his or her audience, is implicated in the narrative" (Hawthorn 145).

[5] One could presume that the novel published by Antunes in 2003, the title of which is *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo*, somehow follows this third pattern.

[6] Maria Alzira Seixo speaks about the "surroundings of the self" ("*os arredores do eu*") referring to the incidence of the autobiographical context in Lobo Antunes's fiction (483).

[7] Chapter "K" in the English translation: "Why the hell won't they talk about it? I'm beginning to think that the million and a half Portuguese who passed through Africa never existed and I am narrating for you a cheap, implausible novel, a contrived story composed of one third bullshit, one third alcohol, and one third tenderness, you know what I mean? to persuade you to watch the sunrise with me in the pale-blue clarity that pierces the blinds and crawls through

the sheets, revealing the curve of a thigh, the silhouette of a shoulder on the mattress, our bodies entangled in torpor" (51).

[8] This new narrative situation may be inspired by Faulkner's technique, principally developed in *The Sound and The Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930).

[9] This expression, "silent interlocutor," was first suggested by João Camilo in an article about *Os cus de Judas* (234). Eduardo Prado Coelho's interpretation underlines the same phenomenon (12), as does Maria Alzira Seixo's analysis (296-97).

[10] Speaking about a fictional universe, it seems more convenient to avoid the concepts true/false to qualify the event of the father's death. Moreover, Maria Clara's diary can be considered as an example of "counterfiction." This term, recently suggested by Maxime Abolgassemi, is defined as follows: "La contrefiction consistera alors, en s'éloignant un instant du fil de l'histoire, à parler de ce qui pourtant n'a pas eu lieu: à ouvrir ainsi dans le récit une branche narrative qui n'accède pas au statut de fait avéré" (223).

[11] In *South of Nowhere*, Lisbon's sky is described as follows: "Even sky is cluttered with flocks of pigeons" (22).

[12] Hence, in *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, there is a journalist who inquires about the suicide of Rui, one of the characters.

[13] Maria Alzira Seixo's analysis examines in detail the lyric elements of this novel, and proposes to qualify it as a "*poema sinfónico em distonia concertante*" (415-25). For the purposes of this study, the question will be treated from the angle of the configuration of fiction, which implies that the genre's hesitation will be somehow resolved by considering *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura* as a novel developing a poetic dimension.

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In the Name of a Father: In Search of a Lost Name and Place

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Abstract: This study focuses on the narrative representation of a specific form of inability to adapt to Portugal's cultural reality in two of António Lobo Antunes's novels: *An Explanation of the Birds* and *O que farei quando tudo arde?* The author seems to be telling the reader that life in contemporary Portugal (after 1974) implies an on-going search for identity.

In António Lobo Antunes's novels all adults are unhappy. This unhappiness is not "uniform," however. The shape of each character's mental and emotional suffering varies, but they all share a relentless, aching pain that afflicts them throughout their lives. The suffering that Lobo Antunes describes in his novels has evolved from a more obviously collective or social (even political) discontent to a more intimate and personal kind. One might say that unhappiness in his early novels seems to be the result of the political context, which introduces important changes in the characters' lives, altering the landscape and density of their experience and forcing them to see themselves and the world around them in new ways which in turn are often the cause of unhappiness. In Lobo Antunes's more recent novels, the realm of unhappiness is limited to the arena of private experience. In our view, although they are not dealt with explicitly in these works, social and political issues are still pertinent to the characters' private experience. Because these issues lurk beneath the surface,

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 291-304.
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and because they relate to very recent events, they have not yet been clearly and adequately examined.

This study focuses on the narrative representation of that specific form of unhappiness caused by the characters' inability to adapt to the reality of adulthood. The two characters singled out—Rui S. (in *An Explanation of the Birds*), and Paulo (in *Que farei quando tudo arde?* [*What Can I Do When Everything's on Fire*])—are profoundly unhappy because in adulthood they no longer have a reason to be who they are. At an age when they should have some understanding of why they have become who they are (and consequently of the meaning of their names), they lose this knowledge and motivation and find themselves adrift amidst random, inexplicable events with which they are unable to identify.

This deep and irreparable failure to adapt on the part of the protagonists in these novels results in their mercilessly distanced and critical view of life. It reflects the estrangement experienced by those who inhabit the adult world as it happens to be organized but without taking an active part in it. This estrangement is of course the attitude of someone who stands *outside*, forging an emotional bond with the reader—as if the narrator made whoever reads the outsider's alienated and critical account of the adult world in which he lives an accomplice to it. In this respect the narrator and the reader generally become a *pair* that gradually merges into one, giving shape to a place and time that the promise of *another* time and place has rendered unfamiliar. This process gives Lobo Antunes's later fiction a utopian dimension.

The theme of failure incorporates the remains of that *other* past time and place that is usually associated with nostalgia for childhood and a vaguely utopian *otherness*. One example of this desire for *another life* is the theme of flight, which appears in both novels. In the first, it is the birds that fly, replenishing the narrator's stock of images that symbolize both the world's beauty (given the frightening ugliness of the world at ground-level, beauty must have wings) and the chance to escape its oppressiveness. Birds also represent that portion of the real world that, once comprehended, enables one to develop a satisfactory understanding of the reality that governs adulthood. The dream-like, emotional logic of Rui S., the main character, dictates that he can only be happy when someone manages to explain the birds to him adequately—that is, when someone finally loves him enough to take his question seriously and to answer it, no matter how absurd it may seem. The fact that no one has succeeded in explaining the birds to him is the equivalent

of what he imagines to be a "given" in his life, namely that no one loves him enough to legitimate his query by answering it. As he says, "I've been waiting for it to happen for thirty years" (186).

In the second novel, flight has a more linear meaning insofar as it is relates to the main character's drug abuse. On the one hand, it has less symbolic weight; on the other, it stands for an even greater distancing from reality, which is rejected because it is despised. Paulo flies when he gets high, and he gets high because he can't stand how he sees himself and how others see him. In fact, he is searching for his name, which in this novel means looking for a voice that will give him an identity by making him a part of the world around him.

There is no question that the failure that inevitably characterizes the experience of these adults goes against conventional wisdom, which prescribes for them a stable, well-integrated and functional (if not actually creative) life that is the outcome of a decision-making process. Beginning with his first novel, *Memória de elefante*, António Lobo Antunes has created protagonists (usually male) who as adults do not identify with the person they have become. Their identity crises are not the principal concern of all of his novels, but in those in which they are, the crisis is the focal point of the narrative.

The thesis of this study is that these personal crises are connected to concurrent crises in Portuguese society. The main character's failure to adapt has a negative equivalent in his perception of the reality in which he lives, a reality which, far from meeting his expectations, constantly frustrates his desire to lead a happy life.

In the first novel under analysis, this failure takes the form of an insistent search for a place that will provide the character with a personal and social identity—in other words, a place and a name superior to those he currently knows, ones that will be a source of self-esteem and accomplishment. Although this search enables the character to imagine being another person living a different life, in reality he never discovers his new identity.

In the second novel under discussion, personal failure takes the shape of a name that is sought but not found until the main character takes another's place, specifically, the place of his (possible) father. Both the protagonist and the reality in which he lives are therefore marked by a lack of personal substance so irreparable that it ends up warping both the individual and his society. In the first novel in question, this deformation leads to Rui's suicide; in the second, it leads to Paulo's decision to assume his father's place by becoming a transvestite.

These acts are the culmination of a sequence of deformations. In *An Explanation of the Birds*, the most dramatic of these is the dream-like episode of the circus, which features members of Rui's family and is repeated throughout the novel. Through mockery and caricature his family members and a handful of acquaintances draw attention to Rui's failure. What he has been asking for, in his imagination, is an explanation of why birds exist: he has asked his father, the blind caretaker of his family's country house, and a certain Madame Simone with whom he has never spoken except through third parties. What the reader gets instead, in the circus episode, are cold, impersonal speculations as to why Rui committed suicide, a clear reflection of the other characters' lack of respect for him.

The dilemma of the main character's failure to relate to the rest of society becomes more acute in Lobo Antunes's more recently published novel. In his first novel, a series of progressively more interrelated sections describes the loss of continuity and the blurred outline of flashbacks; in *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, in contrast, there is no narrative thread at all: in its place there is a discourse of fragmentation, evidence of what Maria Alzira Seixo has called "the lateralization process" that punctuates the plot development. We see this in the ways the narrative focuses on the life and death of Carlos-Soraia instead of the narrator Paulo, his son. Speaking for his father, Paulo tells the story of a deeply troubled man with two names, one male and one female—for him not a sign of abundance or prestige but of disrepute. The juxtaposition of names effectively cancels out the father's gender, relegating him to an existence on the unstable margin of society.

The narrative revolves around the son's attempts to create an intimate portrait of a father whose name slowly changes from Carlos to Soraia without ever choosing one gender over the other. The strange combination of Carlos with Soraia points to transvestism, the result in turn of a shaky compromise intended to legitimate a kind of life that no one finds acceptable (including Paulo's father himself). This obviously undermines the son's chances of acquiring a name that identifies himself with his father in a way that is worthy of respect.

The dual nature of this name in *Que farei quando tudo arde?* stands for a greater problem: the generalized impossibility of acquiring an identity. Of all Lobo Antunes's novels this one goes farthest in charting the crisis—or the total loss—of identity. Maria Alzira Seixo calls it "a novel of defeat and death, of the loss of the 'other,' the family and the self." More than anything, she

adds, it is "a novel about the loss of the world in which one lives" (437). The constant repetition of Paulo's name corresponds in particular to the son's struggle to establish himself as an individual with his own personality.

The novel conveys the failure of his search for a complete name in sentence fragments, systematically interrupted scenes, and crucial words that are never spoken. These random bits of narrative speak of either one or three identities (Paulo, Carlos-Soraia, and Judith) shattered early on in the story, casting the characters adrift with neither self-esteem nor a definable place in society. This constantly punctuated narrative is well suited to the description of characters who acquire substance through successive identity shifts without ever becoming reconciled with themselves (Seixo 432). In this respect, the novel diverges markedly from the one discussed above, in which the identity crisis is framed in quite different terms. Rui S.'s crisis is brought on by an overabundance of references to his roots and to his past, which he represents in the present time of the narration as "bourgeois." His drama is that he cannot free himself from his family's "bourgeois" context in order to devote himself body and soul to the "revolutionary" lifestyle. He never succeeds in emotionally disconnecting himself from what he considers to be regrettable memories of a "bourgeois" name and place, even though his love for Maria, his political soulmate, seems to demand it. Paulo's dilemma is different. Because he was never given a secure, coherent identity to begin with, he is deficient as both a private and a social individual. This is what makes it impossible for him to relate to a structure—any structure—that might provide him with a stable identity.

A crucial aspect of these two identity crises is the way in which the characters conceive of themselves. In each case the self-image is foreign to the actual person, rather than consistent with it—that is to say, it lacks the autonomy that properly characterizes individuals who see themselves as they actually are. The narrative of *An Explanation of the Birds* rests entirely on this perception, not in an obvious way but interwoven with the development of the character and the narration itself. A bold example of a self-image fabricated for someone else's benefit rather than one's own (even though that "someone" remains unidentified) is the phantasmagoric scene of the circus in which Rui S.'s life story is publicly ridiculed in a flow of words interspersed with product endorsements. This version of the main character clearly competes with that part of the narrative which presents his self-questioning of his life—a point of view which has already internalized other people's damaging opinions about him, opinions that in the end categorically damn his actions.

These other characters only acquire substance, in fact, by reference to a point of view or opinion that is foreign and deeply antagonistic to them. In this respect each one's failure comes from being displaced from the center of his life, as if they were all crying out for someone quite alien to them to tell them who they are (there are hints of unconscious masochism in this). This alien *other* is the antagonistic, judgmental, hounding voice that becomes a kind of *negative* human condition that the conscience nurtures in secret (because it cannot be brought to consciousness easily or directly). One might say that in Portugal this voice or point of view is the outer layer of the collective unconscious: it is, unfortunately, part of what it means to be Portuguese. It is an anonymous, amorphous imperative that is present everywhere, afflicting all people in the name of an unrealistic, inhuman perfectionism. It imposes the notion of a conventional, conformist, homogeneous adulthood, the product of an ideal of perfection that is best understood as a state of profound childishness. It is created in the name of some father who neither recognizes us as his own nor wants to adopt us, a father who condemns us to being his children *abstractly*, without mutual recognition.

The manifestations of this diffuse voice are therefore indirect and difficult to recognize. In Lobo Antunes's novels, the unhappiness it causes is on the other hand quite tangible and persistent, although as we said at the beginning of this essay it comes in different forms. Its antidote can sometimes be found in defenses against the failures of the present. One of these is childhood, as seen with particular clarity in *An Explanation of the Birds*. The title refers to the novel's key scene, in which the main character walks around the family's property in the country with his father, who tells us in detail about the birds they see—a moment that is emblematic of and synonymous with the happiness of childhood, forever lost. In the main character's mind this personal, emotionally charged time with his father was the "place" that gave him a name charged with positive connotations, that brought with it a positive identity.

The expression "explanation of birds" labels this moment of childhood happiness of mythic proportions. It also indicates a typical kind of emotional ellipsis, since in fact we know that no one can provide a rational, literal explanation of birds unless the explanation is the equivalent of or takes the place of an expression of love. On this emotional level it can fill in the blank spaces and bridge the gaps that are apparent to reason. Indeed the expression "explanation of birds" implies a coherent subjective or emotional meaning in which a "leap" of the poetic kind takes place. In Portuguese the expression betrays an

omission: because its semantic core is grasped by approximation, its meaning is centrifugal. In order to avoid lapses and ellipses, one would have to add to it, creating an expression like "an explanation of certain aspects of birds." For these reasons "explanation of birds" conforms to a child's linguistic logic, according to which (despite lapses) parents always understand what the child wants to say, that is, they are able to translate their child's unique language into the common tongue.

The son's request to his father, "Explain the birds to me," has two implications: the first, that emotional bonds transcend barriers to communication (as we have already seen, as a matter of fact no one can explain birds to anyone else: all he can do is speak about birds and explain certain things about them); the second, that children's requests to their parents are sometimes exorbitant, as childen expect a great deal (perhaps everything) of their parents. The fact the parents appear to be *able to handle* their children's questions is part of the emotional game that the family plays. If the game doesn't take place, the family's emotional communication is disrupted.

This is the rich life that Rui S. loses when he becomes a grown-up. The father forgets about the birds, which is the same as saying that there is no longer any communication between them. Another detail of this key scene: the mother, who was waiting for the son and his father after they established the emotional bond of the "explanation of birds," called them "my men." Rui S. loses this harmonious communication between the three members of the family triangle forever when he becomes an adult. Such a moment can never occur again: in its stead, there will be acrimony, miscommunication, distance, coldness, and conflict. In Lobo Antunes's fiction it is also common for the parents to lose respect for the child.

Let us turn now to the particular kind of unhappiness that stems from the failures and insufficiencies of adult life which, as we have seen, correspond in some way to life in society. An analysis of Rui S. and Paulo's particular varieties of unhappiness sheds light on the evolution of António Lobo Antunes's novels, in terms of how they portray the way in which a considerable percentage of the Portuguese population views the society in which they live. We will take into account two hallmarks of Lobo Antunes's fiction, namely the deceptive nature and *disfemismo* of their description of people and landscapes and the relationships between them.

The evolution of these novels, beginning with *Auto dos danados* (1985), is seen in the displacement of themes related to the "politicization" of Por-

tuguese society as the center of attention. Beginning with his next novel, *As Naus* (1988), the narrative shifts to a preference for plots about the "individualization" of characters. Rui S. and Paulo are cases in point: in very broad terms, Rui S.'s dilemma has a social and political dimension that is lacking in Paulo's, which is determined, first, by his disfunctional family and, second, by his drug addiction. In this sense the character Rui S. stands for the political upheavals of 1970s Portugal, when the April 25, 1974 revolution ripped apart the social fabric of the nation and also disintegrated the (apparent) unity of the Portuguese family. The different nature of each character's failure is bound with changes in Portuguese society between the mid-1970s and the closing years of the twentieth century.

The most noteworthy change is in effect the shift from the centrality of political issues to the dominance of private life. This does not mean that the two arenas have ceased to coexist but rather that they have a different weight; each has a different importance. The cultural and political dimensions of issues related to private life can also be made out, as they appear in the 2001 novel, but they are not of equal significance.

From the 1980s on, Portuguese politics moved from the streets to public institutions like the Parliament and governmental departments. In other words, politics became professional and came to be accepted as a constellation of power structures that was able to govern the country without being constantly interrupted by the so-called "power of the street." Until 1976, the revolution had indeed been in the street, weakening whoever was in power at the time and corroding political structures that had been organized as such (with the exception of the unions). Administrations came and went in response to calls for political purity from the ongoing revolution that grew less effective in the wake of 25 November 1975. The sharp polarization of the right- and left-wings gradually weakened and social and political battles were restricted to their proper political and unionist arenas, shedding the uncompromising nature that had characterized the political process in the 1970s. As a result, both the right and the left became less argumentative and more tolerant of each other—an outgrowth of an extended process that began when politics was first handed over to the institutions of governance and power.

As political upheaval lessened, the disintegration of the individual and the family became more apparent. This is a crisis that is less easy to describe but nevertheless persistent. As Maria Alzira Seixo has correctly affirmed, *Que farei quando tudo arde?* is the story of an identity in crisis and an inquiry into the

nature of the self (449). We would add that the crisis afflicting both the individual and the family is present in Lobo Antunes's work from the beginning, which in turn coincides with the April revolution and the serious questioning of private life—until then organized along very traditional lines—that it provoked. The individual crises described in Antunes's 2001 novel is of a different sort, however, due to the absence of a specific set of values reflective of the new social reality and capable of replacing the old values suddenly on the wane. Instead of a well-defined substitute, a plurality of possibilities present themselves in a scattered, disconnected, and vague fashion.

Let us look again at the difference between the two protagonists. Rui S. belongs to a family that collaborated with the old dictatorial regime in Portugal: he breaks with it to embrace the ideology of the Left (the word is also capitalized in the novel). His trademark inadequacy, weakness, is the effect of this break, which in subjective, emotional terms is ineptly and incompletely executed. By contrast with Rui S., Paulo has always stood on the outskirts of a society that does not acknowledge his existence, in keeping with his own family background and the collective reality to which it belongs. Insofar as the changes undergone by his most immediate family members (such as his father's turn to transvestism) drive him repeatedly to a marginal state of nonexistence that inevitably ends in the extinction of personal identity, he is just one more piece of both his family and the collective. His answer to this crushing anonymity and to society's humiliating indifference is drug addiction.

As with Rui S., the process by which he becomes a person is a function of his relationship with these two realities, the familiar and the collective. In this respect neither character succeeds in creating an autonomous reality to which he fully belongs: on the contrary, they are dependent on the vagaries of their environment. Each is a model son whose adolescence goes on indefinitely; in each the reluctance to become an adult has to do with the father, who in some way betrayed him when he was a child. This common element appears in the first novel in the traumatic scene of the "explanation of birds" which as we have seen signals the sudden end of communication among the family members; in the second novel, it appears in the ongoing, self-repeating uncertainty whether the father's name is Carlos, Soraia, or Carlos-Soraia. This uncertainty goes to the heart of the question of paternity, which thus becomes problematic, a constant source of anguish for both father and son.

Within the triangle of father, mother, and son—the third side—lurks in fact Paulo's identity. It is a profoundly eccentric and disjointed trio, because

all meanings hypothetically attached to it turn out to be ambivalent. This is because the father is first bisexual, then becomes a homosexual and a transvestite and because, in order to deal with her conjugal heartbreak, the mother gives herself over more or less unconsciously ("sonâmbulo") to prostitution, which in turn causes her to lose her son Paulo's respect. Paulo is someone who must search for a name—that is, an identity—and when he does not find it in sado-masochism (as happens to many of Antunes's characters), he decides to become a transvestite in sudden, false, and *second-hand* imitation of his father.

Although it is true that this is no longer a nuclear family ruled by patriarchal-bourgeois authority, in keeping with the narrative logic of *An Explanation of the Birds*, the means by which it changes is in no sense positive, as it does nothing to enhance the happiness or success of its members. One way to understanding the role of negativity in Lobo Antunes's novels is therefore to assume that the revolution of April 1974 failed to create new values that would enable the Portuguese people to have *another, better lifestyle*. This may well account for the note of frustration in Lobo Antunes's narrative voice: although in the end it is not completely assimilated by that voice (it is always held at arm's length), this frustration is surely shared by many of his readers.

The lesson, repeated all too often, is that the center is condemned to pass away. While it is in the process of disappearing, disparate, scattered remainders of the unassailable traditional order offer themselves as substitutes, as despite everything they have survived the slow but inexorable onslaught of modernity. One of the most original aspects of Lobo Antunes's character Paulo is how he mirrors the problematic relationship of the center to the margins, which is recognized in turn to be one of the principal concerns of fiction of the post-modernist type.

One way in which the passing away of the center is manifested is by the absolute exclusion of feeling ensuing from the social processes that lead to the depersonalization of the individual. This exclusion is apparent in Lobo Antunes's novels prior to *Que farei quando tudo arde?,* but in this work it is plainly accentuated and taken to its logical consequences. Everything that actually happens in the novel is anonymous: the action is located in an imprecise, impersonal place that is synonymous with a character who has been completely drained by random, entirely meaningless events. As there is no intrinsic personal appropriation of feelings, no one in the novel claims the feelings that are expressed for his own. They become impersonal realities maintained by internal attentions, personal-

ized but incapable of personalizing. In a context with parameters like these, personal identity has no place, and actions have no consequences. The specific places described in *Que farei quando tudo arde?* are accordingly commonplace, lacking in character, tawdry, ugly. They are in the part of Lisbon where those who have become slowly and irreparably poorer live. On the map they are in the middle of the city, but in recent decades they have been ignored and left to fester. They are places of shadow, old-age, and oppressive silence.

Whereas from novels like *An Explanation of the Birds* the reader has the impression that Portuguese society is small enough that everyone knows everyone else and all have common values, the author's latest novel gives us a "stretched" society, which has extended itself by means of the anonymity and disintegration of the individual. This "stretching" is entirely negative, as is fitting for an overview of the margins, which is where the novel's characters live. They are marginalized by transvestism, prostitution, and drug addiction, and there is no solidarity among them: as in the case of "ghettoization," the margins are roundly despised by their own inhabitants. This being the case, despite the weakening of the center the margins continue to be despicable: rejected, as if reduced to nothingness, alive only in reminiscence or simulation. The center only exists in the creation of fantasies, more of a symbol than an actual place. For this very reason it freezes the moves in the social game, depriving it of any hint of dialectic.

The relationship between the center and the margins must be taken into account if we are to understand the failures of the characters who are the objects of this study. In Rui S., the flight from the center takes the form of his rejection of bourgeois family values, specifically, his agreement to the separation suggested by his wife and the distance this puts between him and his children. His subsequent loveless and superficial marriage to a colleague who is a militant Communist and his unenviable, devalued job as university professor can only be viewed as marginal with respect to the center defined as his family, traditionalists and supporters of the old regime to which Rui S. is connected by his very origins.

The tension that informs the diegetic fabric of the narrative is expressed through the polarization of left and right, although the tension is mitigated, as always in Lobo Antunes's work, by the failure of either side to win: on the contrary, everybody loses. The Left, which emerged victorious from the April revolution, cannot find its way: politics in the early '80s is clearly retrenching, while private life has not formulated new rules, being still governed by traditional notions of the family, marriage, middle-class women, masculine

privilege, etc. Rui S.'s suicide makes the metaphorical claim that it is impossible to live differently. He finds the life of the typical leftist to be a hodgepodge of leftovers and needs, a squalid, childless, comfortless life of boredom, indifference, isolation, and emotional deprivation. In this sense António Lobo Antunes's fiction seems to be telling us that life in today's Portugal is an ongoing search for an identity. On a more intimate scale, his characters are looking for an identity that always escapes them.

There are, then, many routes in the search for identity. Another identifying feature of the evolution of António Lobo Antunes's fiction is the disappearance from his most recent novels of autobiographical themes like the colonial wars, psychiatry, and the narrative voice of a grown man. The narrator and focal point of the plot in *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura* (2000) is a woman, Maria Clara. The intimate tone is also present in his next work, *Que farei quando tudo arde?*, broadening the range of the doubting, indecisive, anguished conscience and locating it discursively just this side of expression, and just beyond subjectivity. On the one hand, the characters' own discourses are cut off from any semantic set that might provide them with the meaning they seek; on the other, these same varieties of the unsayable are feeling their way *in the darkness of utterance*. In this sense, everything is said: nothing is forbidden. The act of saying can even be seen to speed up: an undirected but overdetermined transparency and nakedness actually take shape with the complete immobility of individuals-objects, that is, individuals made into "objects" to which these characters give substance. These are the discourses of hollowed-out names where inert, inconsequential words dwell in the place of subjectivity.

The endless, obsessive repetition of Paulo's name indicates the impossibility of providing an integrated, focused, human label for this young man who has been given the name "Paulo." In fact the more he speaks—the more he becomes an "object" inhabiting a petrified reality—the less he actually exists. Since subjectivity no longer has any worth at all in the "social" game, Paulo's quest, which lacks substance even though it is uniquely his own, cannot rescue him from the namelessness that afflicts him. This namelessness stems from his personal insignificance in the eyes of others; in their opinion, an insignificance that contaminates his opinion of himself.

Although the characters in all of this author's novels experience identity crises, none are as violent as this last one. Unlike Rui S., Pedro has no family memory in which to anchor or root himself, and to that extent he is the rootless person *par excellence*. His entire life has lacked a center. This is why

the relationship between the center and the margins is a clear indicator of the aporia typical of the way in which contemporary Portuguese society deals with its recent past (that is, the old, traditional, patriarchal order).

The passing of the old order made it possible to think in Portugal that this relationship would somehow change. António Lobo Antunes's fiction tells us that change has taken place only on the surface (it is important to remember that his first works date from after April 25, 1974, so that all of his novels reflect the social and political changes it brought about). The only truly profound difference is that the absence of a center, created by the effacement of the status quo without anything to take its place, has made his characters orphans.

With the passing of the center, one can imagine that the margins will occupy a number of central spaces, doing away with its one-dimensional character. But such a hypothesis is unfounded, as there is no way to determine what the changes that have taken place in Portuguese society actually mean. They are referred to in negative terms, like divorce, drugs, dropout rates, homosexuality, promiscuity, deviancies of the depressed. They are changes labeled by the previous order: they are not autonomous because the center could only be occupied if the subject (if anybody) were equipped to assume the role of subject—subject of power, of knowledge, of history. The sad fact of our state at the moment is that, as Jean Baudrillard remarks, "the subject's position has become simply and purely unsustainable" (96).

The center is a place of fantastic creation: even when it is empty, it emanates the patriarchal order at its most castrating and oppressive. The emptier it becomes, the more powerful it is, self-silencing but active, sacralized and quietly observant in the absence of any current, effective opposition. This interpretation of events might very well explain why the disappearance of the old order in Portugal has not led to a new basis for social unity. The margins have multiplied, from homosexuality to bisexuality, greater promiscuity, different kinds of cohabitation, life-styles, communities of foreigners, etc. At the same time, they have not received any kind of effective recognition. They are perceived as existing in a place and time without worth or importance, even deserving of ridicule. What happens in them is of no consequence, because the margins do not represent a challenge to a reality that is *neither dead nor alive*, although it is still nevertheless painfully "installed."

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Os domingos cinzentos de António Lobo Antunes

Carlos Reis

Resumo: Este trabalho procede a uma análise do *Segundo livro de crónicas.* Nessa análise mostra-se que Lobo Antunes cultiva a crónica não (ao contrário do que afirma) como um mero exercício lúdico ou comercial, antes fazendo dela um lugar de inscrição de grandes temas que a vida do escritor e o ofício do ficcionista (incluindo-se neste a construção de um universo próprio sempre em movimento) regularmente exibem. Alguns desses temas: a questão da escrita, tema que confirma o rigor de uma ética da produção própria de Lobo Antunes, a evocação da infância normalmente em conexão com a presença da família, a guerra colonial, a representação de passados traumáticos e ainda o quotidiano, com os seus pequenos dramas, frustrações e protagonistas anónimos.

1. Em 2001, o escritor António Lobo Antunes foi convidado a proferir a conferência de abertura de um colóquio sobre educação, realizado em Lisboa pela Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian e subordinado ao sisudo tema que deu título ao volume entretanto já publicado: "Espaços de educação, tempos de formação." Ninguém esperaria (eu não esperava), por certo, que Lobo Antunes subscrevesse um texto com a formalidade e com a organização sistemática de uma intervenção propriamente académica; e de facto, algumas pessoas (eu também), ao verem o programa do colóquio, chegaram a pensar que havia engano e que o Lobo Antunes era outro: João Lobo Antunes, irmão do romancista, neurocirurgião e académico prestigiado no meio.

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 305-19.
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Mas não havia engano. Era mesmo o romancista, que de resto não nos desiludiu, bem pelo contrário, exactamente porque essa sua intervenção veio a ser um notável testemunho pessoal, num registo que quero aqui mencionar, também pelos caminhos de reflexão temática e metadiscursiva que esse testemunho abre, em relação directa com os textos de que vou tratar. Intitula-se o depoimento de Lobo Antunes "Facas, garfos e colheres" e nele predomina aquilo que remota e matricialmente determina todos os processos narrativos: a memória. Lembra o escritor, reportando-se ao tempo da sua primeira escolaridade:

> Para tentarem aperfeiçoar o embrião que eu era, os meus pais colocaram-me numa escola onde pontificava um grande educador. Era a escola do senhor André. Isto passava-se num bairro periférico. O senhor André era um grande educador porque era conhecido pelo facto de os alunos dele nunca reprovarem. E, de facto, nunca reprovavam. E o senhor André educou-me o essencial, ensinou-me o essencial, que era marcar o livro de leitura com muita força para, quando no exame da quarta classe o professor me mandasse abrir, eu abria o livro, caía naquela página que eu já tinha decorado. Era o Alexandre Herculano, um fragmento das *Lendas e narrativas* [...]. Isto era apimentado com largas distribuições de bofetadas e, de facto, a educação era espantosa. Era feita com uma régua e ainda hoje sei. Por exemplo, ele perguntava: "As serras do sistema galaico-duriense?" e, se eu ficava calado, ele pegava na régua e dizia: "Penedo," "Suajo," "Gerês," "Larouco," "Falperra." E as serras entraram todas na minha cabeça. ("Facas" 16)

O registo memorial a que me referi é reforçado (e expressou-se no momento próprio) pelo procedimento de pura rememoração sem suporte escrito, eminentemente coloquial portanto, conforme se percebe no texto que acabo de citar, texto de sabor quase infantil, extraído de uma gravação e sem revisão pelo autor. O que aqui bem se percebe são notações e dominantes que quero sublinhar: a referência à família como entidade tutelar e marcante; a capacidade para descobrir grandes personagens em obscuras figuras de retenção infantil, como aquele modesto professor primário, tão modesto mas também tão decisivo como os que muitos de nós tivemos; a referência ao microcosmo da pacata e burguesa periferia urbana da Lisboa dos anos 40; a evocação dos pequenos gestos e das pequenas artimanhas que temperam a singularidade das pessoas e dos comportamentos desse estreito mundo burguês e urbano.

Tudo isso e de novo o primado da memória: não foram apenas as serras de Portugal (e os rios e os caminhos de ferro e as capitais de distrito, como bem

sabemos os que ainda fomos alunos de professores como o senhor André), não foram só elas que entraram na cabeça da criança depois escritor. Foi todo esse universo familiar e social de referência fundacional, mais tarde projectado nos mundos ficcionais que o escritor construiu e também naqueles outros mundos que com ele confinam: os das crónicas que regularmente tem publicado nos últimos anos. É delas que quero de novo tratar.

2. Antes, contudo, de centrar a minha atenção no *Segundo livro de crónicas* de António Lobo Antunes, notarei que a presente exposição decorre de (e relaciona-se com) uma intervenção que me coube fazer num colóquio sobre Lobo Antunes realizado na Universidade de Évora, em Novembro de 2002, colóquio em que me ocupei da cronística até então publicada em livro: exactamente os textos do *Livro de crónicas,* de 1998. Dessa intervenção recupero três noções que dou (pelo menos para mim) por adquiridas e a que obviamente não voltarei.

Primeira noção: as crónicas de Lobo Antunes traduzem uma clara tendência para a interpenetração de modos discursivos, tornando difícil ou mesmo irrelevante qualquer destrinça modal rígida, bem como a fixação inamovível no género cronístico. Segunda noção (e sem prejuízo do que ficou dito): as singulares crónicas de Lobo Antunes são um lugar de expressão mínima mas tensamente concentrada da narratividade, incluindo-se em muitos textos desta natureza inscrições romanescas que a restante obra do autor confirma, num quadro de expressão literária em que o romance se define como género em contacto directo com o tempo presente. Terceira noção: a escrita narrativa de Lobo Antunes procede à reiterada articulação de dois impulsos que, por natureza e por tradição literária, postulamos como polarizados. Por um lado, a tendência para a acentuada inscrição do que é pessoal, autobiográfico, até mesmo confessional; por outro lado, o natural recurso a processos e a categorias que servem uma construção narrativa e ficcional capaz de modelar um universo de objectos, de eventos e de figuras observados com relativo distanciamento.

Para além disso, deve ainda ter-se em conta que, em princípio, as crónicas se apresentam, no contexto da obra já extensa do autor, como textos de circunstância, constituindo uma actividade relativamente recente e por assim dizer paralela à escrita ficcional. Por diversas vezes, de resto, o escritor tratou de desqualificar esta actividade. "Faço-as sempre na manhã do primeiro Domingo de cada mês," explica Lobo Antunes, falando da escrita das crónicas a Maria Luísa Blanco; "são duas e faço-as às duas num par de horas mais ou

menos. Não creio que tenham importância. As pessoas querem uma coisa ligeira que não as faça pensar muito, que as divirta um pouco, esse é o espírito dessas crónicas, para mim não têm nenhuma importância" (Blanco 108).

Olhando, entretanto, de forma mais atenta, distanciada e em termos de conjunto, podemos observar que a experiência da crónica é não apenas recente, mas também relativamente regular: na sequência de uma dúzia de romances e quase vinte anos depois de ter publicado o primeiro desses romances, Lobo Antunes chega à crónica e reúne muitas delas no volume *Livro de crónicas*; quatro anos depois, em 2002, reincide, neste *Segundo livro de crónicas* de que me ocuparei. O que parece significar duas coisas: que, diferentemente de muitos outros escritores, Lobo Antunes vem do romance para a crónica (e não o contrário) e que esse ponto de chegada acabou por se impor com uma regularidade que é também a do contacto com um público muito mais amplo e talvez mesmo diferente do dos romances, em publicações periódicas com um certo prestígio e ampla circulação.

Talvez seja, então, caso para dizer que a menoridade das crónicas em relação aos romances será efectiva no que toca ao investimento do trabalho do escritor, mas não tanto no que respeita aos seus modos de articulação com o universo romanesco e em geral com o imaginário que domina a obra ficcional de Lobo Antunes. Parafraseando o escritor, direi que os "domingos cinzentos [que] desbotam para dentro de nós" (*Espaços* 73) são também aqueles em que, por um par de horas, irrompe uma memória (memória de gente, de emoções, de coisas, de odores, de sabores) que não se esgota na breve crónica que o autor debita, pois que nela aflora também, fragmentária e momentaneamente, o mundo bem mais complexo e traumático que os romances modelizam e revelam. E em harmonia com tudo isso, uma discreta e cada vez mais intensa atenção à formação (melhor: auto-formação) do sujeito-escritor que nos fala, instalado num lugar progressivamente dominado pela maturidade de uma voz que diz o passado com ternura e ironia habilmente caldeadas. Não tem outro significado o texto que inicialmente citei, também porque ele está próximo do registo da crónica que aqui me interessa contemplar: em rigor seria nisso que resultaria a evocação da escola do senhor André e do mais que vem depois, se num dos seus "domingos cinzentos" o escritor passasse à escrita o que apenas lembrou oralmente. Não por acaso, é a escola do senhor André que fugazmente aflora num dos primeiros textos do *Segundo livro de crónicas,* esse que abre com estas palavras: "O dedo imenso e estúpido do professor primário a procurar-me entre as carteiras a pretexto dos afluentes da margem esquerda do Tejo" (*Segundo livro* 25).

3. Olho mais de perto esta crónica e leio nela linhas de desenvolvimento do mundo e do discurso cronístico de Lobo Antunes e mesmo, num outro plano, do seu mundo e discurso ficcionais. Recordação da infância e das dolorosas aprendizagens que ela exige, a crónica "Quem me assassinou para que eu seja tão doce?" é a breve história da perda da inocência infantil, da génese remota de uma amargura adulta e renitente, bem como da fixação irónica de um olhar que percebe no real a dimensão oculta de rostos e gestos banais que só esse olhar singular de cronista-ficcionista é capaz de atingir. Para além disso, a lembrança do "jardineiro que matava pardais estrangulando-os atrás das costas a rir-se para mim; a menina por quem me apaixonei aos dez anos, que ia ser dentista e morreu antes disso" (*Segundo livro* 25), juntamente com o "farmacêutico republicano que aviava receitas a insultar Deus" e com a tia professora de piano que "devia ter amado o farmacêutico em jovem" (*Segundo livro* 26-27), tudo por junto suscita na crónica de Lobo Antunes a afirmação de procedimentos narrativos e paraficcionais relativamente depurados, designadamente estes dois: a coexistência de estratos temporais diferenciados e autónomos, harmonizados no discurso da crónica, e a difusa constituição de personagens indissociáveis de uma vivência pessoal, levando a indagar e a questionar o agente daquele crime de lesa-inocência sobre o qual parece ter sido formado o escritor adulto e a obra literária que nele conhecemos.

O autor de "Quem me assassinou para que eu seja tão doce?" não é já, evidentemente, um romancista em formação, testando nas crónicas e mesmo aprendendo nelas a escrita dos romances que hão-de vir. O cronista é em simultâneo um romancista consolidado como tal, que na crónica, voluntária ou involuntariamente, opera uma espécie de "descida aos infernos" (traumas e perdas, enganos e desenganos), descida que, por aquilo que nela vai sendo redescoberto, ilumina também um processo que pode ser assim designado: identificação de um escritor com infância e com família marcantes. É essa identificação que as crónicas oferecem aos leitores de Lobo Antunes, leitores outros relativamente àqueles que a ficção convoca, porque o são em contexto de recepção cronística, com tudo o que isso implica de contrato e de cenário de leitura e que agora não analisarei.

Falo aqui de identificação de um escritor, tendo bem presente a noção de que este escritor concreto vive (e parece mesmo deleitar-se com isso) em tensão latente e às vezes expressa com aquilo a que chamamos instituição literária, com os seus protocolos, com as suas rotinas e com os seus procedimentos de canonização. Para bem e expressivamente resumir aquela tensão conflitual,

cito um passo da crónica em que Lobo Antunes fala dos prémios literários: lembrando o espanto com que o amigo José Cardoso Pires o via "empilhar os troféus na casa de banho" (*Segundo livro* 24), Lobo Antunes explica-se:

> A casa de banho, próximo da sanita, é o único lugar digno para as recompensas literárias que em regra, aliás, são feíssimas: os meus monstros, em exposição no mármore do lavatório, detêm um higiénico efeito revulsivo. Para ser inteiramente sincero não os considero meus, mas apenas uma tentativa de me anular adoptando-me, conforme fizeram com o pobre Camilo ao nomearem-no visconde de Correia Botelho. (*Segundo livro* 155)

Não entrarei agora na tentadora questão de saber qual o alcance efectivo de um tão negativo juízo vindo de um escritor que, de facto, aceitou receber distinções e mesmo, no caso do texto que citei, comparar-se, por causa das ditas distinções, com um confrade já canonizado. E nem tentarei antecipar o que fará o mesmo escritor se um dia lhe conferirem aquele que é o *prémio dos prémios* ou se só o aceitará desde que (como diz) "não me obriguem a dar entrevistas nem a fazer discursos" (*Segundo livro* 154)—coisa que, no caso do tal prémio, parece difícil de evitar. Em vez disso, trato de relacionar a auto-consciência do escritor com a emergência do passado familiar e das figuras que o povoam, recuperadas em duas crónicas reunidas em sequência no volume *Segundo livro de crónicas*: "Isto" e "Assobiar no escuro." Na primeira é a explicação do nascimento do escritor que abre o texto:

> Julgo que me tornei escritor porque em criança o meu pai me curava as gripes com sonetos em lugar de aspirinas: pela parte da boca que o cachimbo não ocupava saíam ao mesmo tempo fumaças e tercetos cujo efeito medicinal, somado às papas de linhaça da minha mãe, me mergulhavam a pouco e pouco numa espécie de coma rimado, do qual me não libertei totalmente visto que respondo aos polícias das multas em alexandrinos contados pelos dedos no capot do carro. (*Segundo livro* 121)

Bem vistas as coisas (digo eu), dialogar com polícias de trânsito em alexandrinos bem metrificados é quase o mesmo que empilhar troféus literários na casa de banho, à vista da sanita. Há em ambos os comportamentos uma deliberada (quase calculada) derrogação de códigos sociais e culturais, que bem se adivinha na crónica seguinte, "Assobiar no escuro" de seu título. O que aí está

em causa é a adopção de um rumo de vida heterodoxo, divergindo da prudente (imprudente, para o escritor) recomendação dos pais: "Deixa-te de fantasias."

O *leitmotiv* "deixa-te de fantasias" é o anverso de uma atitude de vida (vida literária) em cujo reverso está a negação da comodidade institucionalizada, negação traduzida na atitude de "assobiar no escuro." O que nesse assobio se adivinha é a esconjuração ainda infantil de fantasmas e de medos subsumidos num sentimento dominante, a inquietação que acompanha quem foge da "ambição de poder" e adopta "as pequenas fraquezas onde o prazer se esconde." Escreve Lobo Antunes:

> Suponho que a inquietação é a diferença entre a realidade e os projectos sonhados: isso impede-me as tentações de glória dos intelectuais, ou seja, entrar sem convite onde não me desejam. Em regra fico um momento no capacho antes de me ir embora, por desgosto do espectáculo: a velhice dos nados-mortos entristece-me. (*Segundo livro* 124)

4. O escritor que assim se identifica é aquele que, não tendo seguido o conselho "deixa-te de fantasias," optou por uma ética de escrita mencionada na singular e felliniana crónica "António $56^{1/2}$": "À ética de consumo dos outros contrapunha uma ética de produção, não por qualquer espécie de virtude [...], mas por incompetência de utilizar os mecanismos práticos da felicidade" (*Segundo livro* 18).

Aquém dos "mecanismos práticos da felicidade," António Lobo Antunes cultiva a crónica, não a reduzindo (ao contrário do que afirma) a um mero exercício lúdico ou comercial, antes fazendo dela um lugar de inscrição de grandes temas que a vida do escritor e o ofício do ficcionista (incluindo-se neste, evidentemente, a construção de um universo próprio sempre em movimento) regularmente exibem. É desses temas que tenho vindo a aproximar-me: a questão da escrita, tema que confirma o rigor daquela "ética da produção" que antes citei, a evocação da infância normalmente em conexão com a presença da família, a guerra colonial e, em geral, a representação de passados traumáticos, também e ainda o quotidiano, com os seus pequenos dramas, frustrações e protagonistas anónimos.

Falo da tematização da escrita numa acepção que recobre um arco muito amplo de vivências e de situações. No seu ponto mais abrangente, a escrita vem ao texto destas crónicas como acto que, mais que gesto isolado ou circunstancial, resulta de um grande projecto de vida, sublinhado como tal em

momento de auto-análise mitigada: a crónica, já aqui citada, "António 56 1/2," não por acaso situada logo em segundo lugar na orgânica do *Segundo livro de crónicas*, acentua a funda dimensão existencial de uma opção de vida em que ressoa a infância obsidiantemente revista ("Tardes no jardim, bibes, triciclos" [*Segundo livro* 19]), com tempo decorrido e ponderado, até ao presente em que ocorre este maduro distanciamento de quem se vê *outro;* no momento quase final de um balanço que confirma a persistente consagração de um árduo e sofrido caminho—"jogara tudo no acto de escrever" (*Segundo livro* 17)—o que fica é a expectativa ténue de uma certa permanência, nos termos de uma consciência quase romântica da singularidade do escritor. "Com um pouco de sorte," escreve Lobo Antunes, "talvez deixasse atrás de si não um rastro, não a sua sombra, não uma memória: somente aquilo que, de mais profundo, em si escondia: o que tinha a mais que os restantes" (*Segundo livro* 19).

Isso que o escritor tem "a mais que os restantes" é também uma relação física com a escrita, resolvida numa luta corpo a corpo com o romance que está a escrever: "Nunca estou a gostar do que escrevo, acho que aquele em que trabalho é o mais difícil, acho que as palavras me derrotam. Frases puxadas como pedras de um poço que não vejo" (*Segundo livro* 206). No limite do sofrimento que a escrita implica, quando sente "o plano da história dinamitado pelos caprichos da minha mão" é, então, uma outra mão (um outro corpo, com afecto e com ternura) que o escritor busca: "É da tua mão que eu preciso agora. Há momentos, sabes, em que me sinto tão cansado, todos estes dias cheios de palavras que me fogem. Então penso em ti: Joana" (*Segundo livro* 205). Por fim, a única certeza permitida por esta problematização metaliterária da escrita é a do recomeço incessante: na crónica ("A compaixão do fogo") em que procede à amarga condenação de prémios e honrarias, António Lobo Antunes retoma também, em termos porventura mais consequentes, a imagem de um Sísifo regido por aquela "ética de produção" de que fala algures e que não é, obviamente, uma produção no sentido comercial e económico do termo, porque é sobretudo um trabalho de escrita, com a técnica que esse labor exige, com a coragem que o escritor convoca e com o desassombro de uma relação exigente consigo e com os seus leitores:

> Olho para as estantes e o que vejo são pequeninos túmulos fechados, com cadáveres lá dentro, aos quais me repugna oferecer os jacintos que se compram no portão a vendedores ambulantes de lágrimas. A minha tarefa consiste em desfazer livro a livro os tricots que construí, em desmontar os estados de alma que criei, em jogar

> para o lixo as estátuas que pretendi que admirassem, em ser suficientemente corajoso a fim de subverter as leis que tomei como dogmas, em tomar balanço a pés juntos sobre os meus erros, para chegar mais longe, o que me impede a satisfação da felicidade mas me reserva a esperança do prazer dos meus leitores. E não existe aqui altruísmo algum porque não sou um escritor generoso: apenas um homem de orgulho que julga que ser dotado é ir além do que pode. Não estou no mundo para ajudar os meus admiradores a atravessar a rua. (*Segundo livro* 154)

5. Se a escrita é modo de vida (e também, de um outro ponto de vista, tentativa de superação da morte), ela é também, nas crónicas que suscita, instrumento e veículo de acesso ao grande tema da infância, que em Lobo Antunes é indissociável das frequentes menções à família. Já o disse, a propósito do *Livro de crónicas,* quando nele notei a relevância do universo familiar, do sentido do clã, da casa e do bairro de Benfica, tudo atravessado pela amargura da nostalgia que o tempo passado e perdido deixa insinuar: "Se calhar é sempre noite quando a gente cresce," diz o cronista, quase no final da crónica em que observa que sempre que vai jantar a casa dos pais sai de lá "com a infância atravessada." E termina: "Fico no automóvel à espera que a minha mãe me chame e sabendo que não me chama porque julga que me fui embora. Realmente fui-me embora. Para sempre" (*Livro de crónicas* 234). No caso deste *Segundo livro de crónicas*, a família para que remete a infância é sobretudo a imagem dos avós: a avó materna que a dedicatória do volume evoca e o avô paterno lembrado em "Um silêncio refulgente" e em "Dia de Santo António." Aí e também noutros momentos, como recentemente aconteceu no volume *Conversaciones con António Lobo Antunes* (34 ss.), família e infância cristalizam tematicamente um mundo de afectos a que o escritor adulto volta regularmente, conforme acontece também no texto (de que já falei) "Quem me assassinou para que eu seja tão doce?"

Mas importa dizer alguma coisa mais, para além destas referências relativamente objectivas. Importa notar que o passado infantil que nas crónicas emerge vem à superfície do texto como se resultasse (e resulta efectivamente) de um triplo processo de evocação-representação, cujos vectores, em meu entender, são os seguintes: o culto da autognose em jeito de desdobramento do sujeito, o fluxo de uma memória de coloração proustiana e a fixação interseccionista de estratos autónomos do tempo e do espaço rememorados. Olhe-se de perto a crónica "Olá" e reconhecer-se-á nela, antes de tudo, o tal impulso para a autognose, provindo de um sujeito em processo de auto-observação

quase pirandelliana: "E de manhã lá estás tu no espelho da casa de banho à tua espera," assim abre o texto. E depois, interrogativamente: "Tu esse cabelo, esse nariz, as marcas sob os olhos? Tu" (*Segundo livro* 81).

O sujeito que assim se autodescobre é aquele que reconhece a perda da infância como uma espécie de punição silenciosa para o delito de ter querido crescer depressa; o consolo possível para atenuar essa punição é a memória dos sabores perdidos que de repente reaparecem na boca ("Aproveita o espelho da barba para te acenares a ti mesmo e vais ver que o sabor das uvas do senhor vigário te regressa à boca" (*Segundo livro* 83). E assim, o passado invade o presente, com uma feição de totalidade fragmentada e de certa forma "estranhada" que, outra vez de modo interrogativo, conduz à questionação da identidade do escritor:

> Agora estou em Nelas, quer dizer voltei a Nelas. O meu passado irrompe de súbito pelo meu presente, não um passado morto, um passado vivo: está ali a casa que olhamos do lado de fora, metade da vila mudou e metade não mudou, reconheço tudo e não reconheço nada. Quem sou eu? Este fortuito arranjo de elementos que se chama António Lobo Antunes? Esta soma de partículas, de acasos? (*Segundo livro* 82)

O que ficou, afinal, dessa infância perdida, desse tempo remoto que a amarga saudade do adulto vai reencontrando de forma estilhaçada? Ficaram as feições e as marcas diluídas de gentes, de laços de família, de objectos e de vivências que só pelo labor da memória podem ser retomados; é exactamente a memória que se vai insinuando não apenas como instrumento de acesso ao tempo perdido, mas já mesmo como valor dotado de densa significação pessoal. E ficou também a belíssima imagem dos "olhos cheios de infância" que dá título a uma das crónicas, remetendo aí directamente para as "raparigas da vida" que povoam a Rua Gonçalves Crespo, imagem que o escritor absorve e repete: "Escreve olhos cheios de infância, anda. Assim como assim talvez te ajude a viver" (*Segundo livro* 231).

São os "olhos cheios de infância" que, lembrando o mundo poético de Alberto Caeiro e a sua inocência temperada de sabedoria, determinam e modelam a caracterização de um Deus mais drasticamente dessacralizado aqui do que no famoso poema VIII d'*O guardador de rebanhos*: se o Deus de Caeiro era um Menino Jesus trivializado e, por fim, metáfora do viver simples do poeta pastor de sensações, o Deus de Lobo Antunes provém do tempo infantil do menino de coro assustado pela igreja "grande, solene, cheia de mistérios e correntes de ar, que me faziam aparentar a religião a um sítio

ventoso de onde se saía aos espirros" (*Segundo livro* 89). Desse tempo infantil conserva Lobo Antunes a imagem de um Deus derrogado e delineado agora com os traços de uma banalidade suburbana (como diz o escritor) que directamente remete para o universo da ficção e para a subversão de mitos, de valores civilizacionais e de referências históricas que nesse universo ficcional em muitos casos se concretiza. Cito e chamo a atenção para o efeito desmitificador que a radical irrisão traz consigo:

> O lado suburbano de Deus desagradava-me e o seu retrato, no livrinho do catecismo, ampliava o desagrado: um senhor hirsuto, empoleirado numa nuvem e segurando relâmpagos na mão como os electricistas, ao qual ninguém, com um bocadinho de senso, abriria a porta se o encontrasse no capacho. Era impossível imaginá-lo na sala com a minha família: as visitas a entrarem numa revoada de beijos efusivos, a darem com aquele vagabundo desleixado, o embaraço do meu pai
> — Apresento-lhe Deus, senhora dona Ângela [...].

E depois, ainda no mesmo texto, insistindo no movimento de irrisão e aprofundando a caricatura de um Deus violentamente reduzido à precariedade de uma banal condição humana:

> As visitas criticavam-lhe a roupa e o desalinho, sugeriam que se falasse ao senhor prior numa colecta para lhe arranjar pelo Natal um fatinho decente, o prior, ainda que subserviente aos ricos e poderosos, argumentava
> — Gosta de gafanhotos e mel silvestre, o que se lhe há-de fazer
> e porque quem come gafanhotos não regula bem da caixa dos pirolitos sugeria-se o internamento num lar, com empregadas vigorosas e pouco atreitas a gripes, que servissem a Deus uma sopinha com bastantes couves e alguma carne [...].
> (*Segundo livro* 90)

6. Parece evidente, mas ainda assim convém dizer: para além dos efeitos corrosivos que esta imagística de Deus suscita, todo o tratamento da figura divina, submetida a um nova e perturbante figuração, sugere uma deriva da crónica para o campo da ficção, se é que é possível (e em Lobo Antunes não o é certamente) erigir fronteiras nítidas entre o discurso do cronista e o discurso do ficcionista. Por outras palavras e analisando passo a passo o que aqui está em causa: a crónica "Sobre Deus" abre com uma *boutade* atribuída a Voltaire que, indagado sobre "como era a sua relação com Deus," teria respondido: "Cumprimentamo-

nos mas não nos falamos"; logo depois entra em cena a ponderação judicativa do cronista: "Pela minha parte, não ando longe disso, dado haver coisas que me parecem tão injustas"; a seguir a crónica fixa-se, como tantas vezes acontece, no passado infantil do cronista, ou seja, no tempo do menino de coro assustado pela igreja e pela religião; por fim o discurso da crónica desliza para o imaginário de uma figuração de Deus como prosaico e quase grotesco "patrão negligente" que, a avaliar pelo pó que na igreja se acumulava, "não era assim muito asseado ou então contratara uma mulher-a-dias incompetente" (*Segundo livro* 89).

De que ficção ou (se preferirmos ser cautelosos) de que projecto de ficção se trata aqui? Tanto quanto me parece, a ficção que em diversas crónicas de António Lobo Antunes se vai articulando e já mesmo brotando é a que traduz uma visão do mundo céptica e asperamente crítica, amargurada e sarcástica, profundamente corrosiva mas não isenta de laivos de ternura, essa visão do mundo que, nos romances, tem permitido ao escritor erigir, em clave ficcional, o retrato de um Portugal finissecular, post-colonial e post-moderno que constitui, ressalvadas obviamente as distâncias de registo e de temas, o equivalente à representação do Portugal oitocentista que a Geração de 70 (e Eça de Queirós, em particular) nos legou. Um Portugal a que na crónica "Olá" se chama "Paizinho Portugal. Meu pobre paizinho Portugal" (*Segundo livro* 82), expressão em que combinadamente ressoam a sobranceria de um Fradique Mendes expatriado e a ironia mordaz de um Alexandre O'Neill desmistificador das falácias e das fraquezas do cinzento Portugal salazarista.

Há dois temas que, no *Segundo livro de crónicas,* claramente fazem a ligação para a ficção de Lobo Antunes. São esses temas o da guerra colonial, considerada nos seus efeitos humanos, sociais e genericamente históricos, mais do que como cruel realidade expressamente representada, e o do quotidiano vivido (ou melhor: sofrido) em regime de rotina, de monotonia e de silenciosa aceitação de uma certa "ordem natural das coisas." Reencontram-se esses temas em diversos romances de Lobo Antunes: naqueles que correspondem ao que o escritor chamou, numa entrevista de 1994, o ciclo "das epopeias, com *Explicação dos pássaros, Fado alexandrino, Auto dos danados* e *As naus*, em que o país é o personagem principal," e nos de um outro ciclo, ilustrado por "*Tratado das paixões da alma, A ordem natural das coisas* e *A morte de Carlos Gardel* [...] e a que eu chamaria a Trilogia de Benfica" (Silva); nesses romances, acrescento, e também nos subsequentes, ou seja, em *Manual dos inquisidores* e n'*O esplendor de Portugal,* mas já não, com a expressiva e quase chocante nitidez nos últimos e perturbantes textos do escritor, publicados do ano 2000 em diante e que

são, como se sabe, *Não entres tão depressa nessa noite escura* e *Que farei quando tudo arde.* O que não impede que no *Segundo livro de crónicas* se recupere um texto—a crónica "Não entres por enquanto nessa noite escura"—em que fugazmente assomam o título e a tonalidade temática (que não a complexidade discursiva) de um daqueles textos.

A guerra colonial que nalgumas das crónicas reaparece é certamente a da miséria e do horror humanos que o jovem alferes-médico conheceu em Angola, com os seus conflitos, as suas mutilações e os seus gestos de bravura e cobardia; mas essa guerra colonial (que vem a ser, como se sabe, um tema marcante na ficção portuguesa das últimas décadas; cf. Simões e Vecchi; Melo; Azevedo; Ribeiro) ressurge agora sob o signo de uma memória que estranhamente parece meio obsessiva, meio terapêutica, às vezes e de novo tocada por um *élan* proustiano: "Se for à janela, mesmo em Lisboa, vinte mil hectares de girassol a perder de vista, as pestanas loiras, os mandris" (*Segundo livro* 30). É dessa memória que defluem uma certa nostalgia e os correlatos afectos, que são também, na sua evidência, um efeito da linguagem que suporta o processo de rememoração, como acontece com a carta simples e vigorosa de um (outrora) furriel, que vem permitir uma pausa no sofrimento do escritor às voltas com um romance por acabar. Quando chega a carta do furriel Alves é um mundo que se reconstrói: "e as mangueiras de Marimba desataram a estremecer-me ao comprido no sangue," diz o escritor em "Há surpresas assim." E conclui:

> Ainda aqui estão, estiveram sempre aqui. Isso e nós dois na enfermaria improvisada, emocionados com um primeiro choro vitorioso e urgente. Que sinistros, tocantes, impiedosos, maravilhosos bichos nós éramos. (*Segundo livro* 281)

7. Efeito de linguagem, disse, porque é isso mesmo que acontece, também nas crónicas. Por outras palavras: os textos do *Segundo livro de crónicas* não são (como não eram os do *Livro de crónicas*) o registo neutro de factos e de impressões, antes devem ser encarados como tempestivos episódios de articulação do complexo aparelho discursivo que António Lobo Antunes rege, com agilidade ou com penosa dificuldade, pouco importa agora.

Decorrendo nem antes nem depois da escrita ficcional, antes em paralelo e às vezes em interpenetração com ela, a escrita cronística ensaia procedimentos discursivos que não analisarei agora, já que apenas tratarei de os aflorar: essa é uma indagação que carece de maior e mais sistemático desenvolvimento. Seja como for, a incursão por géneros narrativos outros que não a crónica, o recurso

a estratégias enunciativas relativamente elaboradas, a composição textual exigente, a emergência de categorias ficcionais ou paraficcionais comparecem nas crónicas a par de uma consciência metadiscursiva também reiteradamente afirmada. Significa isto que não raro o escritor tematiza a própria escrita da crónica, mesmo (ou sobretudo) quando nela se declara um vazio que há que superar. Por exemplo: "Há mais de uma hora à procura de uma ideia para esta crónica: não tenho nenhuma" (*Segundo livro* 93); ou então: "Estou há meia hora aqui sentado à espera que me venham as palavras para esta crónica e nada" (*Segundo livro* 105). E contudo, a crónica aparece mesmo, talvez sendo já a outra coisa que implicitamente se afirma quando, no final de um dos textos que citei o cronista se interroga: "Tornando à crónica, o que vou escrever hoje?" (*Segundo livro* 95).

O nada de onde sai o tudo das crónicas podem ser coisas diferentes, já não textos cronísticos, mas também, as mais das vezes, não ainda textos ficcionais formalmente acabados. Desse nada que é o muito oriundo de uma memória autoral hiperactiva saem esboços de personagens em movimento, figuras oscilantes entre a factualidade para que aponta a lembrança ou a observação das pessoas e a ficcionalidade, não raro de consequências caricaturais e desrealizantes, por vezes mesmo de coloração surrealista; desse nada sai também recorrentemente a pulsão autobiográfica, no limiar de uma identificação projectiva entre vida e escrita, que a ficção, à sua maneira, também atesta; desse nada provém ainda a ironia que atravessa os textos cronísticos e em geral todo o universo literário de António Lobo Antunes, uma ironia em que amargura e inocência infantil se misturam, conforme pude notar acerca daquela caracterização de Deus que não lembraria a Alberto Caeiro; desse nada saem ainda derivações genológicas evidentes, designadamete quando a crónica deixa de o ser para se identificar com o registo, com a dimensão e até com a ficcionalidade que reconhecemos no conto, coisa que é evidente em textos como "Novo ensaio sobre o entendimento humano," "*Os Lusíadas* contados às crianças" e "Importas-te de me deixar em paz?"; desse nada sai, por fim (mas isto não esgota, evidentemente, outras possibilidades que aqui ficam em aberto), o anúncio temático e formal do que serão alguns dos romances ou (diz o escritor) "aquilo a que por comodidade chamei romances" (*Segundo livro* 109), tanto no plano temático como no de uma linguagem progressivamente fragmentada e pluristratificada, em termos temporais e em termos espaciais.

É pouco? Não é. Para textos que se anunciavam e anunciam como obrigações cumpridas nas manhãs de "domingos cinzentos" semelhantes aos de algumas das personagens de Lobo Antunes, não é pouco; e não o é também porque estes textos do *Segundo livro de crónicas* surgem irreversivelmente toca-

dos pela solitária, persistente e quase arrogante ética da escrita que António Lobo Antunes proclama e que enviesadamente reafirma quando se define nestes termos com que termino:

> Sou apenas um homem que tenta escrever livros e que sai deles como quem sai duma doença, admirado por estar vivo, e que de vez em quando se interroga sobre estas coisas,...sem encontrar uma resposta que certamente terão, muito melhor do que eu. (*Espaços* 23)

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Negation of the Narrative Framework or the Failure of Narrative Memory: The Case of *Os cus de Judas*

José N. Ornelas

Abstract: As a narrative of the crumbling Portuguese empire written a few years after the colonial war had come to an end, *Os cus de Judas* denounces the affects and effects of that war, which are perceived as a hindrance to any positive representation of the individual and Portugal. The novel's unnamed protagonist is continually rendered impotent in his many attempts to escape the disturbing and obsessive images of the war and to restore a memory traumatized by recollections of the past. These images have a bearing on the articulation of his self and color his vision of a nation still beholden to the rhetoric of its fascist past, which has purposefully erased from its memory the atrocities and the horrors of the colonial war. As an individual condemned to live among the ruins of a former empire defined by a strong instinct for collective forgetfulness, the protagonist comes to the realization that it is pointless to construct a narrative that may provide coherence and unity to his life or give meaning to his country. His only option in life is to engage in a mode of self-referential narration without the possibility of closure.

The twentieth century is characterized by a whole series of abominable acts perpetrated by human beings against other human beings, acts that make the past century one of the most atrocious and violent in the history of mankind. The century, an era of convulsions and atrocities with two world wars, a large number of genocidal attempts including the Holocaust, several colonial wars, multiple acts of violence motivated by ethnic conflicts and hatred, and

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 321-39.
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innumerable acts of terrorism, provokes a deep fissure in the optimism of the Enlightenment project, that is, the idea of history as linear and evolutionary and the notion that the conjunction between reason and science would end all forms of prejudice and would make possible the perfection of mankind and society. In fact, these goals, as a result of all these convulsions, seem further away than ever. In the process, Enlightenment epistemologies have become deeply unsettled; their usefulness as justificatory strategies for projects that advance the human agenda and harness further knowledge have been called into question by a whole range of critics embedded in the new cynicism and skepticism of postmodern society. In a sense, the horrific events of the past century have "destroyed more than the Enlightenment belief in a teleologically ordained future, based on the progress of mankind through scientific reason; [they have] short circuited the future altogether" (Braidotti 48).

A major consequence of all these recent convulsions and atrocities with its consequent decline in the belief in reason as the motor of historical progress has been the appearance of several literary texts in the past three decades that incorporate the voices of the victims or survivors of the events mentioned above. Many critics consider that the comprehension of a particular event is impossible unless the voices of the victims, those who have first-hand knowledge of the events, are taken into account. Friedlander, in his book *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, states that "it is their voices that reveal what was known and what could be known. Theirs were the only voices that conveyed both the clarity of insight and the total blindness of human beings confronted with an entirely new and horrifying reality" (Friedlander 278). Given all the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century, it is only natural that testimonial mode narratives, those centered in the memories of eyewitnesses or victims, begin to play an important role in the communication and the discursive construction of historical reality and in the recuperation of events that were already well on their way to oblivion, as was the case with the Holocaust.

One may even assert that the artistic reconstruction of many traumatic events of this past century owes, in great measure, an enormous debt to those people who lived those events and transmitted them through the memory/recollection that they have of them. *Os cus de Judas*, Lobo Antunes's second novel, is one of these literary texts that attempts to reconstruct the Portuguese past, the horrific period of the colonial war, through the traumatized memory of its anonymous male protagonist who was a medical doctor with the Portuguese army in Angola. As an eyewitness to many of the atrocities of that convulsive

past, the protagonist's memory of events assumes the character of a tribunal that condemns the fragments, the ruins and the scars of the Portuguese colonial past and its effects/affects in the present and views those events, and more precisely those related to the colonial war, as the direct cause for the total disintegration of his self and his country. His writing of the past is a painful (re) inscription of a specific period in the history of Portugal, which has, in fact, violated both his body and his psyche and undermined the possibility that he will ever find a coherent and stable self and a sense of closure to his traumatic experiences. "The most elementary narrative framework, which consists of the continuum of past, present and future, [has] disintegrated" (van Alphen 35) totally in *Os cus de Judas*. The illusion of continuity, the idea that a horrific situation must be followed by a solution, does not take place in the text. The unnamed protagonist still lives the reality of the colonial war, which precludes any possibility of a positive narrative framework that will restore meaning to his life. For him, there will never be a comforting closure to a horrific experience; he has in fact died not only in the figurative, but also in the literal sense of the word.

After the Holocaust and many other geopolitically conflicted upheavals that afflicted the Twentieth Century, in which one must also insert the Portuguese Colonial Wars, many critics and philosophers, such as Adorno and Horkheimer, have begun to reflect on the need to create works of art modeled on truth rather than simply the beautiful, the aesthetic. According to these critics/philosophers, every work of art must be a reflection on the tenor of truth in which the historical context must play a salient role alongside the aesthetic in the reconstruction of reality. As Márcio Seligmann-Silva notes, "[a]o pensarmos Auschwitz, fica claro que mais do que nunca a questão não está na existência ou não da 'realidade,' mas na nossa capacidade de percebê-la e de simbolizá-la" (49-50). Consequently, there is a need to resort to both the aesthetic and truth in order to find the correct voice to comprehend and symbolize the traumatic events that have impacted humanity, in such a devastating way, in the last century. In trying to reconstruct artistically such events, one must bear in mind the words of Douglas and Vogler, in *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*:

> In extreme cases the whole life of a victim can become living testimony to the traumatic experience, both physical and mental, the traumatized body and mind of the victim serving as evidence for the reality of the history that hurts, as the charred remains of a building witness its conflagration. (36)

Acts of memory have always played a crucial role in the construction of the history of Portugal. This phenomenon is even more apparent during the fascist period, which is associated with the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar. One may even sustain that fascism abused memory or, better yet, dismemory to construct a mythical vision of a country, that is, a united homeland on the basis of a mythical identity whose political destiny derived its essence from God and Christianity, ideological pillars of the messianic vision of the country, and also from the evocations of paradigmatic images and symbols of a petrified historical past. The construction of a grandiose past through memory as the foundation for a specific sociopolitical cohesion and for the renovation of spiritual values and a Portuguese national awakening was a suitable discursive configuration to serve mainly the reaffirmation of the dominant ideology, in this case, fascist ideology. It does not come as a surprise that during the fascist period the knowledge of the Portuguese colonial world was transmitted, in great measure, by means of a mode of writing that underscored the active role that cultural memory played in producing models of a hegemonic and authoritarian discourse, which permitted a singular reading of the colonial reality, the one that fascist ideology wished to convey and best served its sociopolitical interests.

Cultural memory during the period of Salazar's dictatorship had essentially a dual purpose: self-aggrandizing and historical manipulation. The cultural memory of the Portuguese historical past, which stressed the civilizing mission of the country through time, was based on the nostalgic and imaginative use of a glorious and grandiose past that did not really quite possess these attributes, as fascist rhetoric constantly suggested, solely with the intention of enthroning an ideological ideal founded on the mythical identity of the nation, as mentioned above. Therefore, it was a historical memory disconnected from the sociopolitical context of the nation, a dis-memory. As it is generally perceived, Portugal has always defined itself, and not only during the fascist period, by a conscience that is obsessed with memorialization. Memory is an intrinsic part of Portuguese national character, a memory that often polemically reinvents the past in order to reshape the present, as is the case with *sebastianimo*. To underscore this point, it would be useful to quote Salazar in his *Declaration on Overseas Policy:*

> The concept of nation is inseparable, in the Portuguese case, from the idea of civilizing mission, far beyond and very different from the introduction of new techniques and of the exploitation of the natural wealth of the territories found.

> In the case of a collection of peoples of different races, languages and religions and of unequal economic levels, nationalizing action cannot cut itself off from the effort which molded the populations, turned to good account the useful elements in the cultures found along the way, sobered down tribal memories and divisive tendencies, made all take part in common work and finally awakened a conscience of the national, that is, created a fatherland and raised the populations to the level of a higher civilization. (35)

Salazar's words demonstrate exactly the way by which a different past/reality can be (re)imagined through memory in order to legitimize Portuguese geopolitical practices and the hegemony of the nation in the African context. The words, which are invested with national political agency and desire, serve as signposts in the geopolitical mapping of the Portuguese African territories and, at the same time, have as its ultimate goal the establishment of cultural homogenization of all the peripheral "others." Portugal is the norm, the desirable center, while the "others" are confined to the position of periphery in need of a center to construct a stable and coherent self, an identity. Finally, Salazar's words seem to stress paradoxically the evasion of memory itself since they are intimately tied to a mode of discourse that formalizes and projects memory while it erases and cancels it, given that historical memory is invented in the passage above. For the Portuguese dictator, acts of memory are solely the pre-history of the nation; their sole purpose is to serve the idealizing and monumentalizing impulses of the fascist regime, as well as his exacerbated sense of nationalism.

In the same way that acts of memory have played a crucial role in the construction of the nation and in the relationship between Portugal and its colonies, especially during the fascist period, they have also contributed significantly to the representation and the evocation of the colonial war in the period following the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974. Rui de Azevedo Teixeira, in *A guerra colonial e o romance português*, declares firmly that several texts of the post-revolutionary period that focus on the colonial war are, in fact, *romances de memória* and that all of them are part of a defined group of texts about that war, which analyzes the interrelatedness present in that literature "entre a descrição de uma agonia imperial, colectiva (a nível textual), e a revelação, mais ou menos dissimulada, [not too dissimulated, I would claim] de uma catarse autoral, individual (no plano do sub-texto)" (17).

Among the many novels that rely on acts of memory, one finds *A costa dos murmúrios* by Lídia Jorge, *Os cus de Judas* by António Lobo Antunes and *Per-*

cursos by Wanda Ramos. Even among the novels that do not resort as much to acts of memory for their representation of the colonial war, as is the case with *Autópsia de um mar de ruínas* by João de Melo, *O capitão Nemo e eu* by Álvaro de Guerra, *Nó cego* by Carlos Vale Ferraz and *Os navios negreiros não sobem o Cuando* by Domingos Lobo, historical memory still plays a prominent role in the fictionalizing of the African experiences.

Memory assumes a multiplicity of roles in the discourses about the colonial war: memory as individual and national trauma; memory as a way to erase what one wants to forget about war experiences; memory as a form of reconstruction and manipulation of truth itself; memory as a way to problematize and to make even more enigmatic the discourses on the colonial war; memory as an assailing specter as a result of the terror/fear/horror/violence of the war without any possibility of erasure; memory as excess of reality of the war; and memory as a supporting or oppositional term of Portuguese history itself. All of these aspects of the discourse of memory, as well as many others, are indispensable to theorize the multiplicity of representations of the colonial war and also for a deeper comprehension of post-revolutionary Portuguese contemporary narrative.

Rui de Azevedo Teixeira, in his book on the literary representation of the colonial wars, writes that

> Com mais de 10.000 mortos, cerca de 20.000 deficientes físicos e ainda, possivelmente, 140.000 neuróticos de guerra, rara é a família portuguesa—salvo os ricos e os influentes do antigo regime e não poucas das mais conhecidas famílias da oposição—que não foi ferida pela Guerra Colonial. E se os custos humanos foram de grandes dimensões para um pequeno velho país de menos de dez milhões de habitantes, as perdas materiais atingiram um nível muito próximo da ruptura económica. (88)

Ex-president Ramalho Eanes has said that this war was both unjust and avoidable. "Nesta guerra, em que o regime português não reconhece o papel director do tempo, a História, forçada de novo, mais uma vez se vinga" (Teixeira 89). This is the message that is present in all the texts that make use of the most recent tragic episode of the Portuguese imperial enterprise, the colonial war, as theme.

If in some of the novels that narrate the experiences of the colonial war, one can already discriminate the conversion of a traumatized war experience into full hope by the announcement of a new history, which will be inscribed

over the history of empire with all its mechanisms of exclusion and domination and by the sense that peripheral resistance to assimilation and homologation will achieve success and lead to the construction of a new self/identity, in other novels there is a more pessimistic tone. In these works, political, moral and individual agency has been rendered totally ineffective by traumatic experiences of the colonial war that still hold control over the psyche and body of individuals, even many years after the end of the war. In the latter novels, the possibility of overcoming the trauma of the colonial conflict will always remain illusive; these narratives do not enable their characters to move beyond a state of helpless victimage. For them, there can never be an end or a sufficiency that will allow them to overcome the trauma; even after the colonial war is over, there is still further loss of self.

Os cus de Judas, whose anonymous protagonist is traumatized both by his inability to envision a future and to perceive his self as continuing over time, belongs to the second group of novels. In the novel, the main character/narrator relentlessly experiences an existential anguish and hell while living in a sort of social, individual, ideological and cultural exile, characterized by a sense of alienation, pain, loss and death. He feels trapped in an impossible no-where space without any exit, a space that has been constructed by Portuguese cultural and ideological fixity in order to erase, in the army doctor's opinion, the atrocities and the horror of Portugal's African (mis)adventures, the nightmarish hell that he really cannot overcome. He clashes incessantly with the values that are immanent to Portuguese society, a society that he really despises and loathes. According to him, Portuguese society practices continuously arbitrary ideological and cultural closures, which lead to injustice, symbolic poverty and the privileging of its values through the exclusion of others, the root cause for the perpetration of violence against the "other" in the colonial war and the reason for the narrator's continually anguished state of mind. "[D]escíamos para as Terras do Fim do Mundo, a dois mil quilómetros de Luanda, Janeiro acabava, chovia, e íamos morrer, íamos morrer e chovia, chovia, sentado na cabina da camioneta, ao lado do condutor, de boné nos olhos, o vibrar de um cigarro infinito na mão, iniciei a dolorosa aprendizagem da agonia" (Lobo Antunes 43).

The army doctor, after his African experience in the colonial war, feels that he inhabits a no-where and a no-place and that he has been condemned to a life of unmitigated ontological insecurity and an endless voyage of anguish where night and death are forever symbolically associated with his personal journey:

> [...] achamo-nos condenados, você e eu [narrator addresses unnamed woman he has met in a bar], a uma noite sem fim, espessa, densa, desesperante, desprovida de refúgios e saídas, um labirinto de angústia que o uísque ilumina de viés da sua claridade turva, segurando os copos vazios na mão como os peregrinos de Fátima as suas velas apagadas, sentados lado a lado no sofá, ocos de frases, de sentimentos, de vida, a sorrir um para o outro caretas de cães de faiança numa prateleira de sala, de olhos exaustos por semanas e semanas de apavoradas vigílias. (167)

As opposed to other novels about the colonial war that underscore the various links between representation of the colonial war experiences, its meaning, and the mastering/restoring of traumatic memory by characters to achieve meaningful narrative coherence, a coherence intimately tied to life histories as continuous unities, *Os cus de Judas* can never establish the linkage between representation, meaning and mastering of traumatic memory, a fact that does not allow the army doctor to overcome the trauma caused by the violence of the war and which leads him to conclude that he is dead: "E descobri, uma tarde, sentado numa esplanada de Algés, na borbulhosa presença de uma garrafa de água das Pedras, que estava morto" (135). He continuously seems to be resisting any sort of comprehension of the events associated with the colonial war, a reality brought about, in my opinion, by the excess of reality of his experiences in Angola, which creates a split between language and the experience since language cannot recover/translate/narrate the real.

The protagonist's memory of the experiences seems to be imprisoned in a quandary of both necessity and impossibility: on one side, it has a pressing need to narrate lived experiences and, on the other, it realizes that language is insufficient to translate the experiences, given that they are in fact beyond narration and/or representation. Consequently, he is condemned to live the traumatic memory of the colonial war without ever being able to construct a narrative that will restore coherence and unity to his life. He is suffering from the effects of traumatic flashbacks, as described by S. J. Brison, in "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self," unable to escape the intrusive and perpetual images of the war. "Traumatic flashbacks immobilize the body by rendering the will as useless as it is in a nightmare in which one desperately tries to flee, but remains frozen" (43).

Indeed, every time that the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* reenacts his traumatic experiences in which events of the past acquire a supposedly active perception in the present, which should contribute, in a sense, to their com-

prehension and a possible transformation of his debilitating trauma and/or obsessive reminiscences into something useful or, at least, the beginning of a personal recovery, he is never able to attain any positive therapeutic effect through the reenactment. Even less can he use the reenactment for the construction of a self with the ability to produce closure, resolution and harmony in a life traumatized by the colonial problematics. The fundamental issue is that the narrator, in his somatic and chaotic discursive reconstruction of the past, is still the object of the "other" or "others," that is, of those who perpetrated the violence against his body,

> [...] os que mentiam e nos oprimiam, nos humilhavam e nos matavam em Angola, os senhores sérios e dignos de Lisboa que nos apunhalavam em Angola, os políticos, os magistrados, os polícias, os bufos, os bispos, os que ao som de hinos e discursos nos enxotavam para os navios da guerra e nos mandavam para África, nos mandavam morrer em África e teciam à nossa volta melopeias sinistras de vampiros. (186)

The passage that follows taken from the novel also reveals the protagonist's lack of control over events.

> [M]as não podíamos urinar sobre a guerra, sobre a vileza e a corrupção da guerra: era a guerra que urinava sobre nós os seus estilhaços e os seus tiros, nos confinava à estreiteza da angústia e nos tornava em tristes bichos rancorosos, violando mulheres contra o frio branco e luzidio dos azulejos, ou nos fazia masturbar à noite, na cama, pesados de resignação e de uísque, encolhidos nos lençóis. (221-22)

The anonymous main character is the victim of another's discourse, the colonial/fascist rhetoric, which impedes him from being the author of his own reality/world. Others are the direct cause of the disintegration of his self and his coherence, a fact that denies him the possibility of overcoming his trauma and, consequently, of creating a narrative framework to make sense out of his life. Without a radical change in his relationship with the world and "others" or, better yet, without the desire or the ability to overcome his status of victim and to assume a role as producer of his world view, which implies a shift from being an object of another's agency to being the subject of one's own, he is doomed to failure. It will always be impossible for him to transform his traumatic experiences "into a coherent narrative that can then be integrated into the survivor's sense of self and view of the world, but also by reintegrating the

survivor into a community, reestablishing connections essential to selfhood" (Brison 39-40).

The possibility of cure or recovery is not really an option for many of the individuals who were traumatized by the colonial war. These, usually, inhabit a state of consciousness that is grounded in a continuous and obsessive dramatic memory of the war experiences, which continually destroys the self through time and space, a self that will never be allowed to have a present or a past, and much less a future: "o futuro é um nevoeiro fechado sobre o Tejo sem barcos, só um grito aflito ocasional na bruma" (Lobo Antunes 109). Or as the anonymous protagonist, in the night that the narration of the novel takes place, tells the woman whom he meets in a bar, a woman who just happens to be another one in a long line of one-night stands:

> [...] nenhum de nós sente pelo outro mais do que uma cumplicidade de tuberculosos num sanatório, feita da melancólica tristeza de um destino comum; já vivemos demais para correr o risco idiota de nos apaixonarmos, de vibrarmos nas tripas e na alma exaltações de aventura, de nos demorarmos tardes a fio diante de uma porta fechada, de ramo de flores em riste, ridículos e tocantes, a engolir cuspos aflitos de José Matias. (168-69)

The reference to José Matias, the protagonist of Eça de Queirós' short story "José Matias," the embodiment of platonic love and of quintessential adulation and adoration of woman as a divine being, juxtaposes the army doctor's current situation with that of José Matias, a man who only lives for the person he loves, the divine Elisa. The pure and spiritual passion that he feels for the goddess Elisa gives meaning and sustenance to his life and allows him eventually to transcend his physical self and reach the space of pure spirit, that is, pure love. No such level of passion can be expected of the tormented and anguished army doctor, for the space of love and the spirit is beyond his reach. Unlike José Matias, he lives in a world totally devoid of master-narratives, a world that can best be characterized by negative transcendence, the death of the spirit, the loathing of most values, a shift from representational to non-representational practices, and a disbelief in any political and historical teleology.

In this world, language is viewed as an unstable exchange between speakers, which makes any attempt at real communication a futile experience. In such a world, there is no possibility of love, a truly communicative act. Even the sexual act, in spite of the many sexual encounters between the army doctor

and women that he meets in bars in Lisbon, as well as his constant alleviation of sexual frustration either through masturbation or with black women in Angola, lies outside a true communicative framework. All the self-masturbatory acts and the many sexual encounters are simply symptomatic of the sterility and his sense of emasculation in the "cus de Judas," a symbolic and unproductive sexual territory that invokes images of sodomy with the power to invert the very concept of "colonialism as impregnation with that of colonialism as 'sodomy'" (Madureira 25). Indeed, the army doctor feels that he had been forced by colonial discourse to become unwittingly a participant in the sodomy of the African continent and that he, in turn, had also been personally sodomized by that very discourse, a situation that is, in effect, the real cause of the protagonist's impotence and incapacity to trope and penetrate any social, cultural, ideological and sexual territory, that is, to reach symbolic climax. Thus, every sexual act in the text must be interpreted as a reflexive act or as a sign of sexual frustration; it can never be interpreted or viewed as a positive sign of cross-fertilization that would give meaning to the world, restore effective communication and effect change. Just like the narrative act of *Os cus de Judas*, every sexual act is always self-referential and symbolically non-climactic. Neither ever transcends itself or becomes meaningful.

If, for example, in *Jornada de África* one can still articulate an exit, albeit a symbolic one, from the difficult situation in which the protagonist, Sebastião, and the nation find themselves, the same cannot be done with regards to the nameless protagonist of *Os cus de Judas* and his homeland. For both, there is no possible exit. No one is going to witness in this text the heroic and symbolic birth of a new man and a new nation, as occurs in *Jornada de África*, even if for such a symbolic event to take place is necessary the disappearance of Sebastião, as had occurred with his namesake King D. Sebastião centuries before, naturally now, as the empire crumbles, in a totally differentiated and transformative ideological path. As one of the anonymous protagonist's aunts tells him, "[s]empre esperei que a tropa te tornasse um homem, mas contigo não há nada a fazer" (244). And right afterwards the text continues: "E os retratos dos generais defuntos nas consolas aprovaram com feroz acordo a evidência desta desgraça" (244). In fact, what the reader is really witnessing is the death of the narrator of *Os cus de Judas* and along with his death the dissolution and the crumbling of an imperial power, which is no longer able to appeal to ontological certainty to produce its discursive strategies and mechanisms.

Os cus de Judas is a first-person narrative with both autobiographical and testimonial characteristics, which has as its salient theme, as mentioned previously, the colonial war. It is an associative narration that begins late in the evening in a Lisbon bar and which meanders through a series of events, most of them related to the protagonist's experiences in Angola, and follows the details of a one-night stand with a woman that he meets at a bar whose voice is absent from the narrative, which has its denouement in the failed coitus in the apartment of the army doctor later on that evening. I say "failed" because both come to the realization that there can never be a climax between them since they are decomposing human beings who are unable to interrelate with each other. Just like the narrative, the coital act cannot have any closure; both are defined by impotence and non-climax. The two characters cannot come together because they both possess an excess of lucidity to really accept the possibility of any meaningful relationship. She is also indifferent towards or even fearful of the army doctor, and he is simply impotent to untangle himself from a discourse grounded on endless traumatic recollections characterized by repetitive and associative traits. It is the colonial war, the foremost obsession of the narrator/protagonist, which acts as the principal factor in the failure of the one-night stand:

> O que de certo modo irremediavelmente nos separa é que você leu nos jornais os nomes dos militares defuntos, e eu partilhei com eles a salada da ração de combate e vi soldarem-lhe os caixões na arrecadação da companhia entre caixotes de munições e capacetes ferrugentos. (143)

And this reality, as well as the difference in perception of the same reality by both characters, constantly interferes with a transcendental love relationship and even the failed coitus of that evening, since in the most inappropriate moments the trauma of the colonial war bursts forth in a series of disjointed and discontinuous images in the narrator's discourse. At the end of that night, daylight will not follow; it will still be metaphorically night for the main character. Nights and bars are in fact sites of refuge for the anguish and the landscape of impotence that have become an integral part of his normative self. He is powerless to confront the ferocity of the day because he is well aware that in it he will not find his salvation. Night becomes him, not daylight. The only option available to him is to continue:

> [...] enredado no seu mundo de dor, culpa e acusação, em que ninguém sai limpo com excepção dos guerrilheiros, fracassa no casamento, no trabalho, na ideologia erigindo-se como o símbolo dessa geração destruída nos cus de Judas e que, após o conhecimento do inferno, ergue as mãos na procura, pelos corpos, pelas noites, pelos copos. (143)

In effect, he only survives in the imagination of an inexistent time of innocence, which the colonial war has stolen from him forever:

> De modo que, se faz favor, chegue-se para o meu lado da cama, fareje a minha cova no colchão, passe a mão no meu cabelo como se tivesse por mim a sequiosa violência de uma ternura verdadeira, expulse para o corredor o cheiro pestilento, e odioso, e cruel da guerra, e invente uma diáfana paz de infância para os nossos corpos devastados. (217)

In spite of his desire that a time of innocence be reinvented, the narrator understands fully well that such a time cannot really exist in his desolate landscape. However, that is the only respite that he can get from his painful and anguished journey, as Maria Alzira Seixo insinuates in *Os romances de António Lobo Antunes:*

> Nesta agonia que perdura na sobrevivência do corpo vazio, apenas um côncavo de sala, de corpo, de paisagem, de mulher ou de memória lhe pode dar ainda a vida da palavra reencontrada e insistente que promove a fala, a imagem do barco (inapercebido) que recolha o náufrago isolado que ficou nos cus de Judas, o frémito do pássaro que voa para longe a caminho da meninice do futuro, na viagem longuíssima até casa. (65)

Yet, even the journey home to a time of blissful youth is doomed to failure since he no longer possesses any apparent coordinates of subject location. He simply cannot and will not identify any more with the geographical, ideological and cultural outlines of a defined place, the main underlying foundation for any concept of subjectivity. His condition is really that of an exile since his life is marked by a sense of loss and separation from all types of mappable spaces that could serve as anchors for the construction of a stable and coherent identity or, as Kathleen M. Kirby puts it, "the fixed parameters of ontological categories, making them containers of essences, in relation to which one must be 'inside' or 'outside,' 'native' or 'foreign'" (19). The main character is

even afflicted by a sense of dislocation and displacement from his home, the ultimate anchoring point and/or the walled site of belonging, where he feels that he is an intruder:

> Uma noite, há pouco tempo, ao atender o telefone, perguntaram-me de um número completamente diferente do meu. Julga que desfiz o engano e desliguei? Pois bem, dei por mim a tremer, de palavras enroladas na garganta, húmido de suor e de aflição, sentindo-me um estranho numa casa estranha, a invadir em fraude a intimidade alheia, uma espécie de gatuno, percebe, do universo doméstico de um outro, pousado na borda da cadeira num excesso de cerimónia culpada. (146)

Indeed, the army doctor lives in a world of constraining enclosures that define him and determine what he can do and cannot do. The metamorphosis (to become a man) that is expected of him when he departs for Angola does not materialize because any positive articulation of the self in the face of a fascist/imperialistic rhetoric whose aim is total appropriation of the physical, psychological, cultural and symbolic space of the self for ideological purposes is simply illusive. If there is a metamorphosis, it is from ontological uncertainty as he departs for active duty in Angola to even greater uncertainty and personal estrangement, given that his self undergoes further violation and habitation from a colonial/fascist hegemonic discourse solely engaged in harnessing its population towards its self-representation on behalf of the "senhores sérios e dignos de Lisboa" (186), the political elite mentioned by the army doctor in the text. He had already foreshadowed such an outcome for his (mis)adventures in Africa:

> [...] quando embarquei para Angola, a bordo de um navio cheio de tropas, para me tornar finalmente homem, a tribo [he is referring to his family], agradecida ao Governo que me possibilitava, grátis, uma tal metamorfose, compareceu em peso no cais, consentindo, num arroubo de fervor patriótico, ser acotovelada por uma multidão agitada e anónima semelhante à do quadro da guilhotina, que ali vinha assistir, impotente, à sua própria morte. (17)

In reality, and taking into account that the unnamed army doctor is, in Lobo Antunes's view, the symbol of a Portugal portrayed as a disintegrating, abject and devastated landscape, an empire in ruins, one may argue that in *Os cus de Judas* the whole nation is impotently contemplating its own death and

also unwilling to comprehend and/or accept the imminent displacement of its historical narrative. As Phyllis Peres observes, in "Love and Imagination Among the Ruins of Empire," the passage quoted above from the novel "is not the epic passage from nation to nationhood, but rather the failed rites of a decadent imagining of empire and manhood that leave impotent both nation and narrator" (193). Portugal, in its negative and abject portrayal, mirrors the image of the protagonist masturbating amid photographs of his military ancestors frowning down on him from the mantle, they themselves "meaningless showcase images from the discursively constructed past" (Peres 199). The army doctor loathes both the war and his country, "um velho país desajeitado e agonizante" (58) or "*Portugal dos Pequeninos* corporativo que fez do Estado Novo uma constante aberração por defeito ou por excesso" (42), as well as all the cynical and selfish ideals "[d]os senhores de Lisboa que disparavam contra nós as balas envenenadas dos seus discursos patrióticos" (205), the real executors of his African nightmarish hell. In the words of Rui de Azevedo Teixeira,

> [...] [e]nlevado pela patriofobia, *Judas* é um romance ressentido que investe de forma biliosa contra a *totalidade portuguesa* nas décadas de sessenta e setenta. A narrativa de Lobo Antunes, em toada de alergia a tudo o que é nacional, escreve-se contra a Guerra Colonial e o sistema político e económico que a produziu e ainda contra o Portugal pós-revolucionário—apenas o curto período revolucionário merece o apoio do protagonista. Neste quadro geral de doentio negativismo, de crítica sem perspectiva, cega, só são minimamente respeitados os portugueses que combateram numa Guerra tornada segredo público quer antes quer depois do 25 de Abril. (312)

In his book, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera writes that the "struggle against power is the struggle of memory against forgetfulness" (qtd. in Brison 49). In *Os cus de Judas*, the protagonist's relentless hyperbolic diatribes against his own country, the imperial power, may be interpreted as the struggle of memory against forgetfulness of a tragic episode in the history of Portugal, which violated and traumatized a whole generation. In order to soothe its anguish and its inability to have any sexual/love encounter based on positive and transcendental values, this generation of which the protagonist is a part has retreated totally into a life of alcohol and cynicism. It is a generation totally adrift capable only of articulating a self in the undesired, nightmarish and wretched space of south of nowhere.

The protagonist's invective against those responsible for his hell in no way will enable his reintegration into society. In fact, it only serves to underscore his sense of nonmastery over the events, which precludes memory as a healing integration. Moreover, his incoherent, chaotic and associative form of enunciating his experiences highlights even further the notion that he lacks narrative mastery over those events. The protagonist's memories compulsively repeated in the novel show that traumatic memory still holds sway over him. Unfortunately, he also lacks another key component in the remaking of the self, a listener to bear witness to his traumatic memories. As Dori Laub observes, the process involves a re-externalizing of traumatic memory that "can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and transmit the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside" (69). The protagonist needs the empathy of other human beings, he needs listeners who feel his pain and who care about him and are willing to listen to him. They are essential for the army doctor to construct a narrative, a signpost of recovery from the trauma of the colonial war. All acts of memory, as Mieke Bal notes, come about in a cultural context and they are characterized by an "exchange between first and second person that sets in motion the emergence of narrative" (x).

The woman whom he meets at the bar does not or cannot in fact bear witness or empathize with his situation since she herself is also a victim of the same discourse. It is not that she denies those traumatic events; it is simply that she is his soulmate, an individual adrift in the space of the "cus de Judas," a mutilated and violated body that can never assume the role of the listener. Furthermore, as Phyllis Peres claims, the silence of the woman "is more the interpolative embellishment to the impotent narration whose meaning cannot be shared and can only be matched by the sterility of silence" (195). In reality, the narrator seems to accept readily the woman's silence and the fact that she cannot assume the role of a true listener since he is well aware that his performative speech act is truly a failed and impotent act of narration. Even though he may not want and/or realize that he cannot get an empathetic listener to bear witness to his trauma, the fact remains that without one the narrative framework fails and his body/self remains inscribed with someone else's language. As a consequence of the inscription, the narrator is simply unable to regain his subjectivity and his voice, both necessary conditions for the nameless army doctor to be identified with a proper name, a signifying marker that will permit him to become connected with a vast interlocking system of cultural and ideological structures.

As Kathleen M. Kirby notes, "a person's proper name is, even more than the address, a signifier locating the subject in discursive and ideological structures. The proper name propels its bearer into an extracorporeal complex" (250) that connects the individual to the spaces of nation, community, gender, and ethnicity. There will not be any access to these spaces for the army doctor, since his traumatic memories totally resist integration. On the contrary, he is condemned to inhabit a space among the ruins of empire where he is forced to indulge in a form of self-referential narration and/or self-referential linguistic masturbation without the possibility of closure in order to reinvent the nation and the self. The prison-house of language in which he finds himself renders him impotent to partake of the reinvention. However, he seems to accept his spatial surroundings, which he likens to a tomb:

> Esta espécie de jazigo onde moro, assim vazio e hirto, oferece-me, aliás, uma sensação de provisório, de efémero, de intervalo, que, entre parêntesis, me encanta: posso assim considerar-me um homem para mais tarde, e adiar indefinidamente o presente até apodrecer sem nunca haver amadurecido. (155)

Both the affects and the effects of the empire in ruins are the source of the impotence and the self-referential nature of the medical doctor's narration. They are also the main reason why his traumatic memories of the colonial war still color his vision of the self and the nation. The colonial war may have ended, the empire may have collapsed, but the narrator still has great difficulty in accepting such facts as a closure of what happened to him and to his country. His anguish does not end with the liberation of the former Portuguese colonies and the Revolution; it is only further highlighted and intensified by a national post-revolutionary discourse defined by silence and forgetting vis-à-vis the colonial war, a discourse that already permeated the fascist period. In essence, his perception of what has happened and is happening in his country does not allow the army doctor to work through his traumatic past, a working through that involves self-reflexivity, distance and re-externalizing of his war memories. The way that the country is dealing with its past only serves to keep his wounds open; it only leads to a further (re)traumatizing of the main character.

In his case, traumatic memory cannot be replaced by narrative memory, which entails both a mastery of a positive narrative framework and the construction of a coherent and integrated self. The traumatic events of his past do not ever enter narrative memory; they always remain at the level of the

unnarratable, of trauma. He is still alive after Angola, but in reality he does not survive Angola. He is alive but dead for all practical intents and purposes. One may then conclude that after the narrator's traumatic experiences in the colonial war his "basic cognitive and emotional capacities are gone or radically altered" (Brison 44) and that the resulting epistemological crisis has left him "with virtually no bearings to navigate by" (Brison 44). He himself seems to agree with the evidence of the previous statements:

> Porque foi nisto que me transformei, que me transformaram, Sofia: uma criatura envelhecida e cínica a rir de si própria e dos outros o riso invejoso, azedo, cruel dos defuntos, o riso sádico e mudo dos defuntos, o repulsivo riso gorduroso dos defuntos, e a apodrecer por dentro, à luz do uísque, como apodrecem os retratos nos álbuns, magoadamente, dissolvendo-se devagarinho numa confusão de bigodes. (193)

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Specters of Colonial Violence: The Archive in António Lobo Antunes's *South of Nowhere*

Patrícia I. Vieira

Abstract: António Lobo Antunes's novel *South of Nowhere* is plagued by ghosts, which function as an archive of the violence perpetrated during the Portuguese colonial war. These specters can be read in light of the notion of "archive fever" propounded by Jacques Derrida, in that they concurrently keep memory alive and lead to the annihilation of archival normativity. It is from the double bind between conservation and destruction of the archive that the possibility of a future emerges. Embracing the ghosts of colonial violence is the first step in the direction of a future where openness to what is to come can be allied to responsibility.

António Lobo Antunes's novel *South of Nowhere* finishes with the prospect of an arrival: "[...] but it may very well happen that Aunt Teresa will visit me" (229), utters the narrator as a form of goodbye, both to the stranger leaving his apartment and to us, readers of the book that has just ended. His remark is not a neutral one. It is a performative statement, as though, by alluding to the possibility of the woman's coming, he could magically make his words come true. We sense longing, desire, and a quiet hope in this farewell. At this point, the reader is already acquainted with Aunt Teresa, who had briefly entered the narrative as a maternal African prostitute. Is she really traveling from Angola to Lisbon to visit one of the many Portuguese soldiers who were her clients years ago? Is she even still alive? Or are we speaking of something else? The ref-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 341-52.
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erence to the potential return of Aunt Teresa, strategically placed at the closure of the book, is the conjuring up of a ghost. It is the specter of the prostitute that the narrator awaits.

Specters always point in the direction of the past, when they were among the living. In this, they are very much like an archive, with which they also share the injunction to remember: a law, a story, a debt, or the violent death of a monarch, as is the case with the specter of King Hamlet, father of the homonymous prince and of all modern ghosts. But archives, again like specters, are not only traces of the past in the present, as Jacques Derrida states in *Archive Fever*: "[...] the question of the archive is not, we repeat, a question of the past [...]. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility" (36). Where lies the future in an archive? Can it be reduced to some kind of futurology, a prediction of what will happen by referring to what once was, the same way certain spirits announce impending events? Rather, what Derrida seems to be addressing is the openness of the archive toward the future. Archives can never be closed, as ghosts are not ever fully exorcised. They keep coming back, in different moments and in various forms. The future of the archive, of the archive-as-specter, is thus a question of the future response, promise and responsibility of individuals and communities haunted by past violence and, ultimately, a question of our own future response, promise and responsibility, as scholars and readers of texts dealing with war, torture, and mutilation.

South of Nowhere is replete with specters. One of the various novels about the Portuguese colonial war that proliferated in the years following the 1974 overturn of the dictatorship, the text is plagued by the ghosts of the dead. The narrator, a doctor who served as a medical officer on the front lines, relates to a woman he has just met at a bar the cruelties he witnessed as a soldier. Throughout his tale of brutality and despair, intertwined in the trappings of a seduction plot, he is visited by the recollections of those he met in Africa, of the ones he saw being killed and of those who helped him live. The text is organized, archive-like, in 23 chapters, labeled after the letters of the Portuguese alphabet and, in its materiality, it performs an attempt to lend reality to the specters it contains. The book, as an artifact and an archive, becomes the embodiment of ghosts that a whole society has tried hard to forget.

Lobo Antunes's narrative, like many of the novels about the Portuguese war in Africa, has been widely interpreted as a condemnation of colonial policies during the dictatorship and as a denunciation of the veil of collective

amnesia that cloaked the past, ensuing the independence of those territories. Some critics have stressed the text's deconstruction of imperial myths (Madureira), while others predominantly focused on the predicament of the main character (Seixo), whose traumatic experience as an officer metonymically stands for the situation of many soldiers who fought in the war. Compelling as these approaches certainly are, they have remained bound to the book's reinterpreting of the past or, at most, have striven to highlight its emphasis on the relevance of the past in the present. In this essay, I would like to take these interpretations as a starting point and venture a step beyond them. I will read the novel not only as an instantiation of a call for remembrance but also as a reflection about the possibility of a future—and what kind of a future—for societies that have both been responsible for violence and undergone traumatic events. Guided by the tropes of the archive and of the specter so prevalent in *South of Nowhere* and building upon the Derridean notion of the archive, I will adumbrate the concept of the archive-as-specter as a possible path to envisage the future. What is at stake is not the exorcism of ghosts but rather the decision to embrace them as the only way to face what is to come.

Toward the end of *South of Nowhere*, when the main character is already in his apartment with his female listener, he leaves the living-room and sits alone in the bathroom, in front of the mirror, to talk to the ghost of Sofia, an African woman he loved during the war and who was killed by the political police (PIDE) for being an informer. The narrator describes his reaction when he learned that she had been assassinated:

> And I leave this tile aquarium as I left PIDE's headquarters, where prisoners tilled the agents' crops bending over the earth in the short, soft gestures of corpses, without the courage of a scream of indignation or rebellion. And I go through this night as I once went through twenty-seven months of bloody slavery, without a protest. [...] Because this is what I became, what they turned me into, Sofia: a precociously old creature [...]. (181)

This passage permeates the various interrelated realities forming the disturbing experience of war at the kernel of *South of Nowhere*: a sense of culpability for the cruelties that took place during the fighting, impotent rage against those in command and remorse for being unable to stand against them. The specter of Sofia and those of the African prisoners continue to trouble the nar-

rator, together with his guilt for conniving with their deaths. In fact, anything remotely close to dissent would not have been tolerated in Portugal during the dictatorship. In the 1960s and early '70s, Portuguese society was placed in the peculiar situation of concurrently occupying the position of hangman and victim. Boaventura de Sousa Santos's notion of "borderland culture," though developed to explicate different phenomena, might prove germane to the understanding of these circumstances. A semi-peripheral nation in terms of the world's colonial system, Portugal always occupied an intermediate position between Europe and its overseas territories, never fully identifying with either (Santos 133).[1] Throughout the 20th century, the country continued to inhabit a threshold. Agents of a despotic domination over their African colonies, the Portuguese were also the objects of political repression at home. Thus, after the overturn of the dictatorial regime and the end of the colonial war, Portuguese society was left with the thorny mission of dealing both with the infinite responsibility of a country that was the perpetrator of atrocious war crimes and with trauma caused by years of oppression at home and fighting abroad. *South of Nowhere*'s many ghosts point toward a possible path for negotiating the meanders of this dual task.

One of the issues that frequently arises in discussions about responsibility and trauma is that of defining whether it is more efficacious to deal with past events through memory or the archive, which, in the context of Lobo Antunes's novel, would be tantamount to enquiring if specters are memorial or archival. In *Archive Fever* Derrida, following the footsteps of Freud, suggests that the archive takes place at the point of structural breakdown of memory. Archives are necessarily consigned to an external place and are consequently hypomnesic and prosthetic, assuring the possibility of repetition, reproduction and memorization (11). However, Freud always maintained the primacy of memory, and psychoanalysis permanently aimed at returning to the live origin, of which the archive was a mere mnemotechnical supplement (92). This stance has not been radically altered in recent debates on the subject. The contemporary proliferation of archives has variously been interpreted as a decline of our capacity to remember (see Nora) or, more optimistically, as a contestation of forgetting (Huyssen 9), yet both positions seem to coincide in their nostalgic longing for unmediated recollection. But was there ever really a time without archives, where everyone and everything was either alive or living on in our memory? Derrida's reflections in *Archive Fever* expand from this very question:

> Supposing, *concesso non dato*, that a living being ever responds in an absolutely living and well-adjusted manner, without the least automatism, without ever having an archival technique overflow the singularity of an event, we know in any case that a spectral response (thus informed by a *techne* and inscribed in an archive) is always possible. There would be neither history nor tradition nor culture without that possibility. It is this that we are speaking of here. It is this, in truth, that we must answer for. (62-63)

The supposition that we might ever receive an event as absolute singularity is a theoretical fiction. Every response is irretrievably contaminated by automatism, by specters and archives. Thus, if the archive is a mere auxiliary of memory, it is a supplement that opens the possibility for history, tradition and culture, i.e., for the capability of remembering as such. Archives cannot arise without memory but remembrance always has a trace of the archival.

South of Nowhere illustrates this interrelation between memory and archive. The main character's diatribe against forgetting is accompanied by his compulsive necessity to relate the experiences he went through during the war.[2] The narrator's iteration of the past translates his need for the exteriority of the archive. He disseminates his recollections through his female listener, who is transformed into a prosthetic support of his memories, thus lending her own reality to the events he remembers. On another level, writing is itself an archival process, as Derrida points out: "What is the moment of the archive? [...] Is it the moment when one presses 'save' in the computer? Or is it simply the moment of writing?" (25). To write is to employ a technical means to create a mnemonic support. Thus the physical existence of the novel in paper can itself function as an archive.

If remembering is inextricably bound to the archive, then a society's unlimited responsibility for its past will always have to involve a form of external support for memory. But archives not only enable our thinking in the preterit. They equally represent a constructive way of relating to disturbing events, as Dean Franco states in an article published in 2005 in *PMLA*. Cultural archives are a particularly efficient way of working through trauma and constitute a model for interpreting what the author names "historically problematic literature" (376). Franco opposes the process of mourning, which he associates with a teleology of cultural wholeness, to the non-redemptive character of working-through, mediated by cultural archives and based upon repetition-with-difference: "Working-through suggests an approach to ethnic history that privileges reading and critique and ever-expanding archives over

closed canons" (382). The archive created by fiction would therefore constitute a privileged means to enable the process of working-through in societies with a traumatic past.

Franco's article offers several valuable insights for the reading of Lobo Antunes's text. On the one hand, its emphasis on culture and literature points toward the collapse of the artificial distinction between private and public archives at work in the novel. This breakdown becomes clear when the main character ironically describes the tutelary entities that dominated his childhood: "The specter of Salazar hovered over the bald and pious small flames of corporative Holy Ghost, saving us from the tenebrous and deleterious idea of socialism" (16). The ghost of Salazar, the ruler of Portugal for over four decades, hovered over the early years of the narrator and embodied a paternal and protective figure. Similarly, the dictator's specter was a constant presence in Portuguese society, all the more insidious for its "rhetoric of invisibility" that made his influence stealthily felt, in the shadows of a low-profile persona.[3] So a personal recollection embedded in a fictional text can form an archive that will prove relevant for a whole community. On the other hand, by stressing the significance of ever-changeable cultural archives, as opposed to the fixity he associates with libraries and museums, Franco identifies the tension between normativity and openness at the core of the archival and of *South of Nowhere*.

Every archive and every text, fictional or otherwise, is built upon an original act of violence, since what is recorded always involves the repression of what remained undocumented. Is the narrator of *South of Nowhere* hiding something? Did the colonial war really happen as he describes? At the moment when something is written, i.e., archived, it silences the suppression of the unwritten and acquires a reality that perpetuates itself. This normative character was already present in the root of the word "archive," which Derrida exhumes in *Archive Fever*. The Greek origin of the term designated the domicile where documents were kept and the concept was closely bound to the authority of the archons, those who possessed the privilege to interpret the law.

Placed from its inception at the intersection of topology and nomology, the archive is dominated by the principle of classification and unification and, therefore, always aspires at repetition without change, at being one with itself. Solipsistic reproduction could also be propounded as the main trait of *South of Nowhere*.[4] The only voice in the novel is that of the main character and the existence of his female interlocutor can only be inferred by some references to the situational context of the discourse. The narration completely adheres

to his perspective, throughout a claustrophobic voyage to his interiority that amounts to a de facto monologue. Furthermore, it becomes clear that he is not telling his tale for the first time, as he sometimes interrupts the story to mention other occasions when he recounted those events to different listeners: "Don't pay too much attention. The wine is following its course and I will soon ask you to marry me, as usual" (30). Enclosed within his subjectivity, the narrator strives to replicate the iterability of the archive. He is the archon who possesses the true elucidation of the events he describes.

Yet, can the narrator of *South of Nowhere* really maintain his pretence of control, this fiction within fiction? Can an archive uphold its institutionally sanctioned iteration without difference? Archives are permanently changing in that, each time they are consulted, they are augmented by new interpretations that will from then on incorporate previously existing files (Derrida 68). Similarly, every time the main character in Lobo Antunes's novel repeats his story he will be amplifying the archive of his war experience and fashioning it anew in adapting to his variegated interlocutors. Any archive or any text preemptively subverts normativity in that, ultimately, the power of its interpretation will lie in its multifarious listeners or perusers.

But Derrida mentions still another reason why the archive can never be equal to itself—namely the fact that its conservative character is always counterbalanced by an archival "death drive" defined as "archive fever." Archive desire and the ability to remember would not exist without the *a priori* possibility of forgetfulness and the destruction of recollections. It is this archiviolithic drive that originates the need for the archival or, in other words, the archive takes place in the tension between conservation and oblivion. In *South of Nowhere*, Portugal collectively wants to forget the war. However, this desire to destroy the recollection of what happened flips into its opposite as the archive fever in the novel originates the narrator's necessity to record the past and the specters that haunt him. Archival authority is thus undermined by archive fever, which, paradoxically, both consumes the archive and is a condition for its creation.

As Dean Franco points out, cultural archives are particularly effective in mediating the process of working through trauma. This is not the case because they possess a flexibility that they would not share with traditional archives, but rather because of every archive's inherent destruction drive. In fact, the archive's desire for annihilation challenges its normative tendency and lends it the openness necessary in a non-redemptive process of working-through. In *South of Nowhere*, the combination of the archive and the archiviolithic

could thus provide a model for Portuguese society to deal with its double burden of responsibility and trauma. The archive, in its conservative, iterative dimension, points toward the need for permanent remembrance. But this authoritative stance already portends the archive fever that lies at its heart. Archivization means the imminent possibility of destruction and the destabilizing difference in repetition, which is also a feature of working-through. Infinite responsibility for the horrors of the colonial conflict and working through the war's traumatic events are part of the same movement.

But the archive, in its pendular motion between conservation and destruction, is not limited to constituting a bridge between past and present. According to Derrida, it is, in fact, in the interstices between archival normativity and archive fever that the possibility of the future emerges:

> The One [...] can only affirm itself and engage itself in this repetition. This is even what ties in depth the injunction of memory with the anticipation of the future to come. The injunction, even when it summons memory or the safeguard of the archive, turns incontestably toward the future to come. [...] If repetition is thus inscribed at the heart of the future to come, one must always import there, *in the same stroke*, the death drive, the violence of forgetting, *superrepression* (suppression and repression), the anarchive [...]. (79)

The future to come presupposes the repetition of the archive and concurrently entails forgetting. It is not knowable or predictable but rather messianic, which Derrida distinguishes from messianism, in that the latter awaits the arrival of a messiah while the former feeds only on hope (72). Further, this promise of the future is spectral, since specters, like the archive, combine iteration and singularity: "A spectral messianicity is at work in the concept of the archive and ties it [...] to a very singular experience of the promise" (Derrida 36).[6] The future is hauntological; it arrives in and through ghosts. The archive-as-specter, placed at the intersection of the archive and of archive fever, will keep recurring in what is to come.

The many specters in *South of Nowhere* mirror the tension between an archival drive and archive fever and point in the direction of the future to come. Toward the end of the novel, when the main character is making love to his interlocutor, he is visited by the spirits of war victims he had met years ago:

> [...] because the guy from Mangando and all the guys from Mangando and Marimbanguengo and Cessa and Mussuma and Ninda and Chiúme will rise inside me out of their lead coffins, wrapped in bloody bandages flying around them, demanding from me in the resignated laments of the dead what I never gave them out of fear: the cry of rebellion they expected from me against the warlords from Lisbon [...]. (191)

This rise of the dead, which could easily have been a scene out of a classic, horror B-movie, happens against the narrator's wishes. Yet, even though he might desire to give in to archive fever and erase some of his worst war recollections, he cannot avoid his ghosts, which function as an archive and keep the remembrance of what he went through alive. The specters' coming is led by their demand that the main character belatedly rebel against the combats waged by Portugal but, even if he repents for his lack of protest, he will never be able to modify his past silence. The spirits' request is, in this sense, impossible to fulfill and, since their command will never be fully satisfied, they will continue to torment the narrator.

Likewise, the experience of the war will continue to disturb the Portuguese people, in spite of their desire to bury the past. Furthermore, the apparitions in the passage quoted above are particularly striking because they arise *inside* the narrator. It is as if, through a process of Freudian melancholia, they had been incorporated into the main character's self. Moreover, in some parts of his discourse the speaker insists upon the spectral traits of his own existence: "[...] I found out one afternoon, as I was sitting in an esplanade in Algés in the bubbly presence of a bottle of sparkling water, that I was dead" (11).[7] The narrator has become living-dead, almost indistinguishable from the other phantoms surrounding him. The text thus carries out an undoing of traditional categories in the novel insofar as the fictional reality embodied in the characters can hardly be disentangled from the fictionality of fiction represented by the ghosts. The specters in Lobo Antunes's narrative, archives of the colonial war's most atrocious crimes, could be read as standing for the ghosts that haunt Portugal. They cannot be disavowed or considered as mere external presences but are embedded in society and form a part of the country's understanding of itself. These spectral archives have acquired a reality of their own and need to be accounted for in any possible future.

At the end of chapter D in *South of Nowhere* the speaker states that, as he left Luanda to travel to the heartland of Angola, he initiated a "painful

learning of agony" (43). But the text cannot be reduced to a mere recounting of past misery and to the realization, in hindsight, of the deleterious effects of a deadly war. In fact, the discovery of suffering goes hand in hand with the apprenticeship of how to cope with it. This reading would concur with João Camilo's description of the novel as a "Bildungsroman" (245). However, while Camilo considers that the text recounts a failed learning, we might rather allege that it is simply an unfinished one, which is still going on at the moment of enunciation. The narrator slowly realizes that any attempt to exorcise his ghosts is doomed to failure. Salazar's spirit, his militaristic dead grandfathers and all those he saw dying in Angola, both his fellow soldiers and the Africans assassinated by the military and the secret police, will have to be acknowledged as the spectral archives of his past and, ultimately, as part of his identity. Learning to live with ghosts is learning to live with oneself, and this is a process that stretches endlessly into the future. If justice is the opposite of forgetting, as Derrida mentions in *Archive Fever* (76), then any society behooves its archives. Lobo Antunes's text seems to suggest that, in the case of Portugal, the acceptance of the archive-as-specter collates both the need for working through traumatic events and the responsibility for the colonial war. Learning to live with ghosts is the only possibility of openness to the promise of a *to come*. This is why, at the end of the novel and of a voyage through the violence of the conflict in Africa, the narrator of *South of Nowhere* summons the spirit of a woman he had met years ago. His encounter with Aunt Teresa's ghost is a token of his future. He wants to be haunted.

Notes

[1] Santos illustrates his affirmation through a Shakespearean metaphor: "Contrary to all other European nations, Portugal had to see itself in two mirrors, Prospero's and Caliban's, and was conscious that its truth lay somewhere between them" (133).

[2] Throughout the novel, the narrator frequently accuses Portuguese society of attempting to erase the recollection of the war: "Why the hell don't we talk about it? I am beginning to think that the million and a half men who were in Africa did not exist and that I am telling some sort of tale of poor taste and impossible to believe, an invented story with which I make you feel emotional" (79).

[3] In *Retórica da invisibilidade*, José Gil argues that Salazar developed a rhetoric of silence, which rendered his public persona almost invisible. This invisibility made Salazar even more revered and was a powerful tool in helping him maintain his power for so long.

[4] *South of Nowhere* has frequently been criticized for its solipsism. Maria Alzira Seixo, for instance, argues that, by negating the other's voice, the narrator becomes imprisoned in his own

subjectivity, thus forming a circle from which he cannot escape: "This novel represents the negation of the other's word [...]. In an attitude of continuous circularity, enclosed within himself or turned to mirrors, he [the narrator] loses the word of his partner, the event of dialogue and the plot of live conversation" (64, translation mine).

[6] The spectre unites the repetition of the archive and archive fever, the undoing of archival authority: "Also, the spectral motif stages this disseminating fission from which the archontic principle, and the concept of the archive, and the concept in general suffer, from the principle on" (Derrida 84-5).

[7] The notion that the narrator is himself dead is reiterated throughout the text: "If the revolution has ended, do you understand?, and, in a certain sense, it really has ended, it is because the dead from Africa, their mouths full of dust, cannot protest [...]. And we, the survivors, remain so doubtful that we are alive that we are afraid that, through the impossibility of some movement, we will realize that there is no flesh in our gestures and no sound in our words and we realize that we are as dead as they are [...]" (73).

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O barulho surdo(?) da(s) raça(s) em *O meu nome é Legião*

Ana Paula Arnaut

Resumo: Dando conta de episódios e de situações que nos são temporal e espacialmente próximos, *O meu nome é Legião* é um dos mais violentos romances de António Lobo Antunes. Numa tentativa de contrariar o fenómeno de "amnésia colectiva" que parece ainda existir em Portugal relativamente a um passado colonial, o autor expõe variadas questões raciais e, concomitantemente, denuncia inúmeras violações aos mais elementares direitos de igualdade entre o Homem.

Em crónica intitulada "Receita para me lerem," António Lobo Antunes sublinha o facto de não existirem nas suas obras "sentidos exclusivos nem conclusões definidas" e exige "que o leitor tenha uma voz entre as vozes do romance [...] a fim de poder ter assento no meio dos demónios e dos anjos da terra" (*Segundo livro* 114). É, justamente, a tentativa de encontrarmos o lugar da nossa voz no meio das vozes de *O meu nome é Legião,* como no meio da voz do próprio autor e de outras vozes, que nos leva a ensaiar uma leitura no âmbito dos estudos post-coloniais desta que é uma das mais interessantes obras da constelação ficcional antuniana.

Recordamos, entretanto, que, no interessantíssimo trabalho *Os romances de António Lobo Antunes,* Maria Alzira Seixo chamou já a atenção para o facto de a experiência colonial dever ser considerada "de importância central e determinante" na produção literária do escritor:

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 353-65.
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> A guerra, a luta contra quem se não quer destruir; o sofrimento, a morte, a separação da família e da terra natal; o alheamento progressivo em relação a uma natureza humana em que o indivíduo se reconhecia e que parece depois abandoná-lo irremissivelmente; a observação da outra terra que se ocupa, em atitude de estrangeiro fascínio e de gradual e afectiva adopção—são componentes da experiência colonial e da má-consciência de parte dos portugueses combatentes em África, que fazem da obra de Lobo Antunes um lugar literário privilegiado para o estudo dessa situação humana complexa e [...] para a consideração dos modos narrativos e da questionação da subjectividade na sua modalidade de escrita, nomeadamente através da problematização da identidade, do sentimento de pertença e da relação com o outro. (Seixo 499-500)

Cumpre destacar, todavia, que a forma como essa experiência se prolonga na tessitura narrativa vai ganhando contornos e cores diferentes, de acordo, como não podia deixar de acontecer, com a evolução literária antuniana. Assim, é verdade que *Os cus de Judas* (1979) se apresenta como o único romance em cujas páginas, de modo sistemático, se aborda a questão da guerra colonial—a partir da experiência pessoal vivida em Angola entre Janeiro de 1971 e Abril de 1973. Não é menos verdade, porém, que uma leitura da globalidade da obra de Lobo Antunes revela como obsessiva não só a questão das relações de Portugal com "o outro" mas, acima de tudo, as suas consequências, isto é, os resultados da prática de uma certa política colonial.

Deixando de lado romances como *O esplendor de Portugal* (1997) e *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo* (2003), cujo enredo retoma em grau e modos diversos o espaço e questões de África (do passado mais distante como do mais recente), acreditamos poder afirmar que a presença e a memória de África, e tantas vezes a memória concreta da guerra e dos seus efeitos e prolongamentos, podendo não constituir o cerne da narrativa e da narração, faz-se presente de modos mais ou menos subtis.

Sublinhamos, exemplarmente, as pontuais lembranças da guerra que percorrem *Memória de elefante* (1979) ou *Conhecimento do inferno* (1980); as não tão pontuais recordações do grupo de ex-combatentes em *Fado alexandrino* (1983); o relato dos efeitos da descolonização através do paródico regresso dos retornados em *As naus* (1988); as simples alusões feitas por diversas personagens, como o pai de Rui S., que em *Explicação dos pássaros* (1981) discursa sobre a "nossa obra civilizadora em África" (126); as meras referências a uma decoração que exibe artefactos africanos ou que reproduz paisagens de

África, como o "óleo de queimada africana na parede" em *A morte de Carlos Gardel* (197); ou, ainda, a inclusão no xadrez narrativo de personagens e de situações-conflitos sociais que, de forma inevitável, convocam a memória da experiência colonial, como acontece em *O meu nome é Legião* (2007). Afinal, ao contrário do que observa o alferes, personagem de *Fado alexandrino,* talvez não seja "esquisito como as coisas horríveis se nos pegam, viscosas, à memória [...]" (66).

E talvez por isso, do que se trata é de, através da memória individual, (re) avivar uma memória social que parece ter desaparecido, transformando-se ou diluindo-se em fenómeno de amnésia colectiva (este, sim, esquisito). António Lobo Antunes relembra, a propósito:

> Quando publiquei *Os cus de Judas* tive muitos problemas porque contava algumas coisas, como quando a polícia política chegava onde nós estávamos com os negros e faziam com que o primeiro da fila cavasse a sua fossa, metia-se dentro e o polícia atirava sobre ele, o segundo tapava a fossa, abria a sua, metia-se dentro, outro disparo, e assim por diante. Isso foi um grande escândalo aqui em 1979 porque depois da Revolução toda a gente queria esquecer. (Blanco 153)[1]

Decorre do exposto que a violência que, regra geral, preside aos universos romanescos antunianos é uma violência justificada, porque necessária ao não esquecimento. É também uma violência tanto mais real quanto especula testemunhos em primeira-mão ou, no mínimo, se baseia em extrapolações permitidas por esses mesmos testemunhos-vivências. Não se estranha, por consequência, que, recuperando técnicas de apresentação formal já anteriormente ensaiadas (da investigação, da inquirição e do inquérito-relatório policial), o romance *O meu nome é Legião* seja um dos mais violentos romances do autor. Talvez não o seja do mesmo modo que o são *Os cus de Judas*, *O esplendor de Portugal* ou *Boa tarde às coisas aqui em baixo,* com os seus terríveis episódios de guerra, perseguição, mortes e tortura física—ou talvez o seja também por isso—mas porque se trata de uma obra cuja essência temática desnuda um vasto número de violações aos mais elementares direitos de igualdade entre o Homem.

Esta sensação, esta certeza da violência, respeita ainda ao facto de, a acompanhar a exposição dos conflitos inter- e intra-raciais, as personagens fazerem uso de uma linguagem crua, objectiva e ostensivamente racista, como veremos. Ora, e na sequência do que acima dissemos, se tivermos em mente que é

também o próprio autor quem sublinha a necessidade de, nos seus romances, partir de "um cenário sólido," de "uma base real," apontando que "a casca são pessoas que eu conheço, como as casas, como as ruas," que depois veste "por dentro e por fora conforme [lhe] apetece," então não é difícil compreender que o que desse modo extensionalmente se opera é a desmistificação da não existência de racismo em Portugal (Dias 151).

Além disso, a violência a que nos referimos é uma violência que se torna absolutamente assustadora porque reflecte episódios que nos são próximos, espacial e temporalmente próximos. Referimo-nos não apenas aos assaltos a áreas de serviço na auto-estrada do Norte (*O meu nome é Legião* 15), a lojas de telemóveis (19), a carros (20), a casais de namorados (164), ou a cabinas das portagens (291), entre outros episódios, mas, essencialmente, ao microscosmos social em torno do qual se orquestra o romance. Por outras palavras, reportamo-nos a toda essa matéria humana que é, ainda, o resultado (inevitável?) de um processo de descolonização mal pensado e mal conduzido. Um conjunto de homens e mulheres descendentes em segunda ou terceira geração desses que, no pós-25 de Abril—ou para fugir às guerras civis ou, simplesmente, para tentar melhores condições de vida—optaram por regressar a um país que, no passado recente como no presente de enunciação, não parece ter condições para os receber digna e igualitariamente, relegando-os e confinando-os a guetos-bairros de segunda categoria. Disso mesmo é exemplo o Bairro 1º de Maio, que serve de pano de fundo ao romance em apreço e cujo assunto é apresentado nos seguintes termos:

> [...] um grupo de miúdos negros ou mestiços, nascidos em Portugal e que não pertencem a Portugal, nem a África. O livro é sobre um gang desses miúdos que assaltam, roubam, etc. Um gang que a Polícia persegue e que vai tentando matar um a um. Crianças de 12/13/14 anos. (Silva 522)

Com estas palavras resume António Lobo Antunes o leque de um dos grupos de personagens de *O meu nome é Legião* e com as que a seguir transcrevemos se lhes refere, identificando-as, o agente responsável pelo inquérito policial e representante possível do grupo que se lhes opõe:

> Temos motivos para adiantar com base em actuações pretéritas essas sim já aferidas que os suspeitos se distribuíram nos veículos de acordo com a ordem habitual, ou seja o chamado Capitão de 16 (dezasseis) anos *mestiço*, o chamado Miúdo de 12

> (doze) anos *mestiço*, o chamado Ruço de 19 (dezanove) anos *branco* e o chamado Galã de 14 (catorze) anos *mestiço* na dianteira e os restantes quatro, o chamado Guerrilheiro de 17 (dezassete) anos *mestiço*, o chamado Cão de 15 (quinze) anos *mestiço*, o chamado Gordo de 18 (dezoito) anos *preto* e o chamado Hiena de 13 (treze) anos *mestiço* assim apelidado em consequência de uma malformação no rosto (lábio leporino) e de uma fealdade manifesta que ousamos sem receio embora avessos a julgamentos subjectivos classificar de repelente
>
> (vacilámos entre repelente e hedionda)
>
> a que se juntava uma clara dificuldade na articulação vocabular
>
> muitas vezes substituída por descoordenação motora e guinchos logo atrás [...]. (14; itálico nosso)

Do modo como se vai dando a conhecer o desenvolvimento da investigação policial levada a cabo—e que envolve, necessariamente, outras personagens cujas vozes se vão chamando à boca de cena da narrativa—, torna-se possível, então, ilustrar as tensões raciais, e também identitárias, que caracterizam o Portugal coevo. Um jogo de forças que podemos enquadrar no âmbito da conhecida e célebre imagem de Prospero e Caliban (Santos 31). Assim, do que se trata em *O meu nome é Legião* não é propriamente de comentar as actividades criminosas perpetradas pelo que podemos designar por Grupo dos 8. Trata-se, antes, de expor esses comentários em paralelo com o factor raça, isto é, fazendo depender a violência do facto de serem brancos—civilizados—ou negros—selvagens. Se no episódio do assalto ao casal do carro esta dicotomia se encontra subentendida na afirmação "— Não somos senhores somos pretos" (em resposta dada à pergunta "— O que desejam os senhores?"), ela está, pelo contrário, muito explícita no comentário inicial do Polícia (*O meu nome é Legião* 22). Este salienta

> [...] a importância do chamado Ruço ser o único caucasiano
>
> (raça branca em linguagem técnica)
>
> e todos os companheiros semi-africanos e num dos casos negro e portanto mais propensos à crueldade e violência gratuitas o que conduz o signatário a tomar a liberdade de questionar-se preocupado à margem do presente relatório sobre a justeza da política de imigração nacional. (14)[2]

A isto acrescenta, entre tantas apreciações negativas, que "o que este país tem de sobra são mestiços e pretos" (40), isto é, "raças inferiores" (66). A

assunção da inferioridade racial já havia levado o seu ajudante a exclamar "— Ponham-me a mandar neste país durante cinco minutos e mato os pretos todos" (29).[3]

Este racismo arreigado leva ainda o Polícia a nunca verbalizar o nome da mulher mestiça com quem viverá no Bairro 1º de Maio, no decurso do cumprimento da missão de deter(-matar) os suspeitos, apesar de ao leitor ser possível verificar uma paulatina transformação da repulsa inicialmente sentida em carinho e afecto.[4] Sentimentos que, todavia (por vergonha racial?) nunca se assumem, nunca se dizem, de forma desassombrada.

Mas os juízos que mais acentuam a relação maniqueísta na diferença entre as raças chegam-nos também, mas não exclusivamente, pelas vozes da prostituta (branca) que irá viver com o Gordo, do padrasto (branco) do Miúdo do avião, ou, ainda, do marido-companheiro (branco) da irmã do Hiena. É, com efeito, a partir dos registos-vozes destas personagens que se dá início à "criação de um estereótipo do colonizado como animal selvagem," de acordo com o que escreve Frantz Fanon:

> Às vezes esse maniqueísmo chega ao extremo da sua lógica e desumaniza o colonizado. Propriamente falando, animaliza-o. E, na realidade, a linguagem do colono, quando fala do colonizado, é uma linguagem zoológica. Alude-se aos movimentos de réptil do amarelo, às emanações da cidade indígena, às hordas, à peste, ao pululamento, ao formigueiro, às gesticulações. O colono, quando quer descrever e encontrar a palavra justa, refere-se constantemente ao bestial. (38)[5]

É assim que, pela voz da prostituta, ficamos a saber, de forma reiterada, do "cheiro grosso que os perfumes não tiram" (*O meu nome é legião* 81, 88-89, 112); um cheiro que parece alastrar-se-lhe, ao ponto de (num processo de diluição da identidade) sentir ter perdido o que nela havia de branca (96-112).[6] Salientamos também as referências ao ódio que o dono da hospedaria tem aos "pretos" (75), a troça que se faz de uma mulata (85), ou, retornando à prostituta, as alusões ao facto de sentir ser melhor que o Gordo por ser branca, dando graças a Deus por isso (81, 84).

Além do mais, é também pela voz desta personagem que conhecemos a violência que, até na morte, assiste ao destino do "outro": "se um mestiço morre neste Bairro entornam a pessoa no vazadouro ou fica semanas num talude até os insectos da terra a levarem com eles" (93). E se, por vezes, nos parece ser possível ler (tal como no já mencionado caso do agente da Polícia)

alguma afectividade, (quando se interroga, por exemplo, se sente a falta do preto), a verdade é que o tom predominante se encaixa nas considerações tecidas por Fanon, mormente no que respeita ao estabelecimento de uma linha de zoormofização que transforma o "outro" em macaco: "onde morávamos o que não faltava eram quartos, sujidade, trastes mais velhos que eu, os brancos sem se chegarem à gente / Os macacos" (94, 116).

Lançado o mote, e após terem sido largados, no apeadeiro, os cadáveres de dois dos miúdos (o Gordo e o Miúdo), cumprirá ao Polícia (num registo que intersecta o da prostituta) dar continuidade à racista imagem zoomórfica: "Os mestiços hão-de enterrá-los descansem / dado que os macacos se enterram uns aos outros, é da natureza dos bichos cavarem com as unhas sem entenderem porquê, esses instintos deles" (121). O nome de um dos adolescentes, o Cão, ilustra também, desde logo, a estratégia de zoomorfização.[7]

Em tonalidades diversas, mas todavia afins, esta imagem depreciativa prolonga-se quer na voz do padrasto do Miúdo do avião quer no discurso do companheiro da irmã do Hiena.

No que à primeira personagem diz respeito, a identificação negro-bicho acontece de forma ora explícita e certa, ora com "nuances" dubitativas:

> [...] o miúdo mestiço, a minha esposa mestiça, os primos mestiços em cada canto do Bairro
> (acasalam entre si como os bichos)
> sumidos em gretas, furnas
> (exactamente como os bichos)
> ou depenando noitibós na rua
> (até escaravelhos comiam garanto) [...]. (129)

Nesta mesma linha, é também muito elucidativo o seguinte diálogo:

> — Uma mestiça que tolice
> a minha prima a abanar-me
> — Se me visitares com ela ponho-lhe o comer na tigela dos cães
> e a minha esposa de gatas na cozinha ou trancada na varanda enquanto os meus tios [...]
> não a deixando aproximar-se
> — Não tens vergonha tu?
> surgem de mil pontos cardeais, atenciosos, íntimos

> Cá estou eu cá estou eu
> e ao darem pela minha esposa
> — Não tens vergonha tu?
> olhos cegos e no entanto vendo, palavras letra a letra, pesadas duras terríveis, duvido se palavras
> — Não tens vergonha tu?
> o que herdámos de África macacos que nos mentem, nos roubam e a gente
> — Por favor
> antes de ficarmos de bruços, a gente
> — Por favor
> ao ficarmos de bruços e chaves de parafusos, navalhas, vertemos o comer na tigela dos cães como ela gosta, sabe lá de copos e talheres, estendem-nos
> estendem-nos a palma atrás das grades aos crocitos, vais ter filhos pretos pendurados de cabeça para baixo das sanefas, uma sorte que a Polícia nas figueiras bravas, se o teu pai sonhasse, se a tua mãe
> (a magrinha de cabelo vermelho?)
> sonhasse
> (quem era a minha mãe?)
> voltavam cá cima para te meter na ordem [...]. (136-37)

Talvez por isso chegue mesmo a advogar que se aperte "a goela dos mestiços [...]" que se derrame "petróleo nas cabanas," que se pegue "num fósforo / [como em África não era, exactamente como em África]" (153).

Num outro exemplo, porém, a certeza zoomórfica mescla-se, como dissemos, de alguma dúvida:

> [...] o meu enteado e os amigos a passearem nas dunas não como passeiam as pessoas, como passeiam os animais
> (dizem que os pretos animais não sei, pergunto-me se a minha esposa um animal, há alturas em que me parece querer falar e não fala, detém-se à beira de uma frase e vai-se embora [...]). (159)[8]

Note-se que esta ideia da ausência da capacidade de verbalização, ou que simbolicamente podemos ler como tal, contribui oblíqua mas extensionalmente, em conjunto com a ausência do "mecanismo das lágrimas," para o processo de zoomorfização, isto é, para essa linha de desumanização de que fala Fanon (140).[9] Afinal, o que também distingue o Homem do animal é a

capacidade da fala [...] e do choro [...]. No que se refere ao segundo caso acima mencionado, o do companheiro da irmã do Hiena, só aparentemente se atenua a cor racista das apreciações feitas ou a identificação negro-animal. É certo que, neste caso, a linguagem pode não ser tão explícita como a do padrasto do Miúdo; mas não é menos certo que se torna plausível observar a mesma violência e o mesmo desprezo pelo "outro." Além de salientar "o instinto dos pretos / [que] (até um osso farejam)" (232), dá continuidade a todo um processo de inferiorização, patente, entre outros, no seguinte excerto:

> Claro que é mestiça e portanto má rês, apontem-me um preto como deve ser, trabalhador, honesto e por mais que se esforcem não encontram nem um, conheci--os de ginjeira em África e aqui, em África até que a revolução os tornou donos do que nós fizemos e eles destruíram num instante matando-se uns aos outros e aqui para onde nos acompanharam nos barcos a *guinchar-nos* à volta
>
> Senhoras e senhores
>
> tão maltrapilhos como dantes e *lambendo-nos as mãos numa esperança de dono* visto precisarem que tomem conta deles para não morrerem de fome a mastigarem raízes e a catarem piolhos à entrada das cubatas de modo que cá os temos a norte de Lisboa enchendo as quintas abandonadas [...]
>
> a acenderem fogueirinhas com sobras de mobília enquanto os netos em bando na Amadora com manias de branco *vestidos como uma caricatura de nós* [...]
> (223-24; itálico nosso)

Todavia, o que de curioso acontece é que vai ser pelo estabelecimento de um outro jogo de tensão racial—instituído em paralelo com este que acabamos de mencionar—que o barulho surdo(?) da(s) raça(s) mais se fará ouvir. E se assim ocorre é porque, agora, surge a hipótese de a dicotomia Prospero-Caliban, isto é, branco-mestiço/negro, ser reduplicada no âmbito das relações raciais entre os dois últimos (sem que, contudo, o branco deixe de encarnar a imagem de Prospero em relação aos dois "outros"). A figura de Prospero pode, pois, ser também reduplicada pelo mestiço, passando o negro a ser visto, por este, como o selvagem Caliban. Fazendo prova literária do que apontou Boaventura de Sousa Santos, o que *O meu nome é Legião* ilustra, certificando-o, é que "A miscigenação não é a consequência da ausência de racismo, como pretende a razão luso-colonialista ou luso-tropicalista, mas é certamente a causa de um racismo de tipo diferente" (Santos 41).

E nesta outra variante de racismo que no romance se vai insinuando, a supremacia do branco continua a fazer-se sentir, na medida em que, situado num meio caminho entre raças—numa espécie de território que não se quer ocupar—o mestiço pode também sonhar parecer/sonhar ser branco e não negro. Assim, se, por um lado, ouvimos a mãe do Miúdo (mestiça) a dizer-se preta—e, por isso, a não ter "um lugar que nos aceite salvo figueiras bravas e espinhos"—claramente evidenciando a consciência da impossibilidade de ser aceite no seio de Prospero, por outro lado, faz-se também ouvir a voz da avó do Miúdo do avião (mestiça) que diz sempre ter querido "um branco que a fizesse sentir branca e a tornasse branca" (*O meu nome é Legião* 172-73).

É também pela voz desta última personagem que se faz ecoar um tempo colonial, tornando-o presente e, por isso, prolongando em tempos post-coloniais esse outro tipo de racismo decorrente da reduplicação da imagem de Prospero.[10] Ao recordar o tempo de África, a avó do Miúdo permite-nos, pois, saber do distanciamento racial que a miscigenação desde sempre impôs:

> [...] a mim a quem criaram numa vivenda a sério com rosas-chá em torno que se adivinhava o perfume, *empregados que não moravam com a gente e eu odiaria que morassem, moravam nas cubatas com os seus panos do Congo e o seu cheiro e a tua avó* [da Mãe do Miúdo] *com eles, não nos entrava em casa*, não
>
> — Filha
>
> ao dirigir-se a mim, a tua avó
>
> — Menina
>
> *sem se chegar é evidente*
>
> — Menina
>
> *uma preta descalça não uma branca como eu* e na qual o meu pai não reparava um minuto, uma ocasião dei por ele intrigado
>
> — Quem é?
>
> procurando na memória, não a descobrindo e esquecendo-a, nós na praia do Lobito ao fim da tarde e ele não menina, ele
>
> — Filha [...] (184; itálico nosso)[11]

Além disso, como facilmente se depreende das apreciações feitas pelos companheiros-maridos brancos da mãe do Miúdo e da irmã do Hiena (ou, apesar de tudo, pela atitude do Polícia em relação à mestiça com quem vai viver), a simpática e benevolente ideia do luso-tropicalismo parece ser irremediavelmente minada. Tal acontece, segundo julgamos, na medida em que

os jogos relacionais instituídos não deixam pressupor o respeito recíproco ou, para o mesmo efeito, o amor isento de qualquer tipo de preconceito, isto é, de igual para igual. Pelo contrário, a forma como se põe em cena o jogo de relações íntimas entre as personagens, o modo como diariamente conviveram e convivem, deixa sempre vir ao de cima as almas coxas onde vários tipos de ressentimentos acomodados e a mania da superioridade branca não passam despercebidos.

A leitura dos capítulos 15 e 19, onde é dada voz a jovens que constituem o Grupo dos 8, também não deixa passar despercebidos os maus-tratos a que foram sujeitos, quer pela própria família, quer pela Instituição a cargo de quem um dia ficaram. No que respeita a este último caso, os maus-tratos trazem à memória, mais uma vez, situações bem recentes que foram dadas a conhecer pelos meios de comunicação social. Referimo-nos, agora, a situações de abuso sexual, de pedofilia, protagonizados no romance (em paralelo com a realidade) por um médico, por um ministro e por um vigilante da Instituição. Nestes episódios, como em outros de que já demos conta, dramatizam-se as tensões, os conflitos entre raças que deveriam ser tidas como iguais mas cujas diferenças, afinal, os tempos post-coloniais não esbateram. Não podemos, portanto, deixar de ficar a interrogação: acabado o colonialismo terá também acabado a mentalidade colonial?

Notas

[1] Para a referência à "amnésia colectiva" (Blanco 58). No romance, dirigindo-se à sua sempre silenciosa interlocutora, interroga-se ainda: "Porque camandro é que não se fala nisto? Começo a pensar que o milhão e quinhentos mil homens que passaram por África não existiram nunca e lhe estou contando uma espécie de romance de mau gosto impossível de acreditar, uma história inventada com que a comovo a fim de conseguir mais depressa [...] que você veja nascer comigo a manhã na claridade azul pálida que fura as persianas [...]. Há quanto tempo não consigo dormir?" (*Os cus de Judas* 69).

[2] Comentário repetido na página 30.

[3] A ideia da inferioridade do negro está também patente em outro tipo de situações—quando, por exemplo, no decurso de um dos assaltos uma das vítimas dialoga apenas com o rapaz branco porque ninguém "perde tempo com mestiços" (*O meu nome é Legião* 164).

[4] Depois de lhe ser dito que há coisas (ordens) que não se podem escrever, é-lhe comunicada "verbalmente a possibilidade, segundo o [seu] critério [...] do uso da força e inclusive da utilização por necessidade extrema de armas de fogo de modo a uma resposta satisfatória às instruções do Comando" (*O meu nome é Legião* 34).

[5] No Prefácio, Jean-Paul Sartre chama também a atenção para a desumanização exercida

sobre o colonizado: "A violência colonial não se propõe apenas manter, em atitude respeitosa, os homens submetidos, trata também de os desumanizar" (Fanon 15).

[6] Um doutor (médico) pergunta ao marido da irmã do Hiena se "O cheiro da sua esposa não lhe mete impressão," enquanto este refere ter permitido à mestiça "que ficasse apesar do cheiro que têm." O dono do armazém que recebia a mercadoria roubada menciona também o "mau cheiro dos pretos" (*O meu nome é Legião* 196, 224, 252).

[7] O dono do armazém refere-se também aos modos de cão de um preto (não de um mestiço, logo, supomos, não do Cão) que parava pelas redondezas do armazém (*O meu nome é Legião* 258-59).

[8] A determinado momento lemos, ainda, a propósito do assalto ao casal homossexual, na praia: "os mestiços e o branco em torno dos homens, vendo bem os brancos tão selvagens quanto os outros, pensava que não e enganei-me" (*O meu nome é Legião* 165).

[9] Esta ideia da ausência da capacidade de verbalização está também implícita em comentário do dono do armazém: "se um de vocês entender um preto dou-lhe um doce, pedem perdão, gaguejam" (*O meu nome é Legião* 264). "Os mestiços não choram porque o mecanismo das lágrimas não nasceu com eles que vantagem [...]" Posteriormente, relembra "o tal mecanismo que não nasceu com eles" (154). Esta ideia parece prolongar-se na aceitação resignada da mãe do Miúdo, que, ao contrário dos brancos, não tem alma: "quando era pequena veio um padre branco falar-nos de Deus e do Seu divino Amor e da Sua Bondade e de que me valem o Amor e a Bondade se não tenho alma … não tenho alma, sou preta" (296-97).

[10] Frantz Fanon diz, a propósito: "Essa agressividade sedimentada nos seus músculos, o colonizado manifesta-a primeiro contra os seus [...]. Frente à situação colonial, o colonizado encontra-se num estado de tensão permanente. O mundo do colono é um mundo hostil que rejeita, mas ao mesmo tempo é um mundo que faz inveja [...]; o colonizado sonha sempre em instalar-se no lugar do colono. Não para transformar-se em colono, claro, mas para substituí-lo. Esse mundo hostil, pesado, agressivo, porque rejeita com toda a sua força a massa colonizada, representa não o inferno de que devia afastar-se o mais rapidamente possível, mas um paraíso ao alcance da mão protegida por terríveis cães de guarda. O colonizado está sempre alerta, decifrando dificilmente os múltiplos signos do mundo colonial; nunca sabe se passou ou não o limite. Frente ao mundo determinado pelo colonialista, o colonizado presume-se sempre culpado. A culpabilidade do colonizado não é uma culpabilidade assumida, é antes uma espécie de maldição, uma espada de Dâmocles. Mas, no mais fundo de si mesmo, o colonizado não reconhece nenhuma instância. Está dominado mas não domesticado. Está inferiorizado, mas não convencido da sua inferioridade. Espera pacientemente que o colono descuide a sua vigilância para lhe cair em cima" (Fanon 48).

[11] Atente-se, ainda, no que diz a mestiça com quem o Polícia vai viver: "*o meu pai mestiço e portanto eu não preta para os pretos, eu branca*, eu menina a comer um nada de arroz com garfinhos de folha e até um cálice ou dois e uma terrinazita sem pegas, *como o preto uma franja de tapete* não lhe apetece convidá-lo para almoçar com a gente, põe-se ao lado do seu filho e oferecemos-lhe macarrão peixe batatas / — Mais batatinhas coradas? / *que o umbigo dilata e encolhe derramado no chão talvez seja capaz de engolir, há-de engolir, engole, o preto* que acompanhava o meu pai à fazenda e reunia os da senzala com uma chibata ordenando / — Tu tu [...] " (*O meu nome é Legião* 314-15; itálico nosso).

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Ana Paula Arnaut é doutorada pela Universidade de Coimbra, onde lecciona Literatura Portuguesa Contemporânea. Publicou, entre outros livros, *Memorial do convento—História, ficção e ideologia* (1996), *Post-modernismo no romance português contemporâneo: fios de ariadne-máscaras de Proteu* (2002), *José Saramago* (2008). Principal área científica de investigação: Literatura Portuguesa Contemporânea. Email: arnaut@ci.uc.pt

Bibliography of António Lobo Antunes

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I. Works by António Lobo Antunes

The following bibliography lists the original Portuguese editions of Antunes's works with no mention of their multiple reprintings or of their Brazilian editions. English translations are listed according to their first US editions. Prefaces, introductions, forewords, etc. written by Antunes in another author's work have also been omitted from this bibliography. Since 2005 Antunes's novels have been republished in the *ne varietur* edition by Dom Quixote in Lisbon. This editorial project is led by Maria Alzira Seixo and includes Graça Abreu, Eunice Cabral, and Agripina Carriço Vieira. Lastly, although Antunes is formally trained as a psychiatrist with several articles to his credit in the field, none of these are included in this bibliography. Please consult António Bettencourt's article in this volume for information on Antunes's published work in the area of psychiatry.

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13 Poems by Gastão Cruz

Translated by
Alexis Levitin

Gastão Cruz (b. 1941) is the author of 20 collections of poetry, including *A moeda do tempo* (Time's Coin, 2006). In 1975, he cofounded the Theater of Today, a repertory group that performed for over twenty years. For this group he translated Chekhov, Camus, Crommelynk, and Shakespeare into Portuguese. His influential poetry criticism is collected in the volume *Poesia portuguesa hoje* (*Portuguese Poetry Today*).

Alexis Levitin's publications include contributions to *APR, Chelsea, Grand Street, Partisan Review, Prairie Schooner, New England Review,* and *Kenyon Review.* He has published twenty-three books, including *Forbidden Words: Selected Poetry of Eugénio de Andrade* (New Directions, 2003), and *Guernica and Other Poems* by Carlos de Oliveira (Guernica Editions, 2004). Levitin is presently completing work on the poetry of Herberto Helder and Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, a project begun under a 2003-2004 NEA Translation Fellowship.

Editor's note. Alexis Levitin's translations were done in collaboration with the author. In the past few years, Levitin placed over thirty of Gastão Cruz's poems with *Confrontation, Crab Creek Review, Dirty Goat, Faultlines, Folio, Marlboro Review, Metamorphoses, Mid-American Review, Northwest Review, Osiris* and *Rhino.*

Copyedited by Anna M. Klobucka.

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 377-93.
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Depois dum sonho

Não deixaste o deserto mas
árvores na casa Em sonho és
o sedutor arbusto reflectindo
para sempre o meio-dia O sol
porém desfaz-se quando as pálpebras
num ardor se entreabrem e te ocultas
nos ângulos do quarto Ausente
és pois o centro
feroz da minha vida transitas
como serpente fria no ventre
contraído escondes-te na
floresta que sem cessar se expande
onde dormíamos E erras
nos limites duma casa
destruída por raízes

After a Dream

It wasn't desert you left behind but
trees here in the house In dream you are
enchanting foliage reflecting
noon forever The sun
however melts away when my eyelids
in ardor half open and you shroud yourself
in the corners of the room Absent
you are now the savage
center of my life You crawl
like a cold snake across my quivering
belly you hide in
the forest that endlessly expands
where we used to sleep And you wander
the confines of a house
destroyed by its thickening roots

Rede

O rosto está atrás
duma rede silábica
reconheço-lhe a boca
de noite interpretando
a floresta no quarto

Reconheço-lhe os lábios
na casa inabitável
onde ausentes juntamos
a fala imaginária
e reconheço os dedos

como dados lançados
sobre a mesa do corpo
todavia alcançada
somente pelo ar
(mais veloz do que água)

Os dentes deixam marcas
enquanto tu te calas
e espalhas
na alma um esperma brando
e ácido

Web

The face is behind
a web of syllables
I recognize its mouth
deciphering by night
the forest in the room

I recognize its lips
in the uninhabitable house
where, absent, we connect
imagined words
and I recognize those fingers

like dice thrown down
upon the table of the body
and still reached
only by the air
(swifter than water)

Teeth leave marks
while you say nothing
spreading
over my soul smooth
and bitter sperm

Entre o mar e a ria

Faltarás algum dia nos meus versos
isto é, na minha vida ou ficarás
nos versos só, atravessando um tempo
que não será futuro como agora

Irei depois mostrar-te uma casa
vazia
entre o mar e a ria
tão semelhante à que as ondas levaram

Soluço

Não poderei
tirar-te desse abismo
sentar-te à mesa
já estou
também, sei bem, um pouco morto,
por ti por esse
dia
que ao formar-se deixou
o soluço do tempo
audível no algodão com que taparam
a tua boca

Between Lagoon and Sea

You will be missing one day from my poems
that is, from my life or else you will remain
only in my poems, passing through a time
that will not be the future as it is now

I will show you then a house
a vacant space
between lagoon and sea
so like the house the waves once took away

Breath

I won't be able
to pull you from that abyss
place you at the table
I, too,
I know it well enough, am also somehow dead,
with you with this
day
that in taking shape left
the breath of time
audible in the cotton with which they stuffed
your mouth

Muro

A transparência espessa
do ar que devagar
se formou tão depressa
em frente do olhar

é a de um muro fluido
que não deixa passar
o impuro murmúrio
da voz sem luz nem ar

Devagar

Por fim despedes-te o murmúrio torna-se
inteligível
Para mim correndo
regressas entre os vivos pilares da natureza
(há quanto tempo?) A roxa flor existe
no fim da primavera
Ouço o sussurro Devagar a terra
já entrega às raízes
o múrmuro dizer

Wall

The thick transparency
of the air that slowly
took shape so quickly
before one's gaze

is that of a fluid wall
that won't let through
the impure murmur
of a voice with neither light nor air

Slowly

In the end you take your leave the murmur turns
intelligible
Running toward me
you return through living pillars of nature
(how long ago?) The purple flower appears
at the end of spring
I listen to the whispering Slowly the earth
gives to roots
the murmuring of speech

Flores do verão

> [...]
> *sinto-vos, vindes ao rés da terra, como ventos baixos,*
> *poisais no peitoril.*
> Fiama, "Epístola para os meus medos"
> *Epístolas e Memorandos*

Estás no meio das árvores dos
pássaros das
sombras no regresso da praia
as flores do verão também estampadas
na solidão da saia outras crescendo
naturais sendo umas o futuro e as da
natureza
o momento presente a estampa que
te envolve saindo
dos arbustos movidos pla leveza
imperceptível quase do espírito
ar
que virá um dia
transformar-te
como do rés da terra um vento baixo
subindo ao peitoril onde te inclinas
para as
flores do verão ainda

Flowers of Summer

I feel you coming along the ground like low winds,
you settle on the windowsill.
Fiama, "Epistle to My Fears"
Epistles and Memoranda

You are in the midst of trees of
birds of
shadows returning from the beach
the flowers of summer printed as well
on the solitude of your skirt others growing
naturally some being the future and those of
nature
the present moment the imprint that
surrounds you emerging
from the shrubs moved by the lightness
almost imperceptible of your spirit
air that one day will come
to transform you
like a low wind coming along the ground
then climbing to the windowsill where you
are leaning still
towards the flowers of summer

Velha imagem

Peso do céu que nunca dirá nada
como um golfo de morte um poço
em que não entra o balde que na casa
cortava outrora a escuridão da água

A primavera revelada

Não a primavera interior, interdita, a da casa, nascendo
dentro, entrando para as ruas, memórias breves, marcas eternas
subitamente extintas, dissolvendo a parte fechada dos parques,
absorvendo os narcisos, em infernos exíguos, agora antigos, não
a primavera definida pelos aromas fixos, de interpretação
impossível, a não ser na mutação dos corpos, no conhecimento
das ínfimas estrias, no futuro então explícito, nas ruas de colunas
ondulando ao ar frio, não essa primavera tardia, no futuro
retida, mas a revelação revista, a sucessão das ondas, como quando
a primeira primavera sobre o corpo corria.

Então a voz

Então a voz passou por cima
do oceano
e era um som de vagas
o mesmo som ouvido nos verões
quando a luz sobre a pele
se transformava em água

Old Image

Weight of the sky that will never say a thing
like a gulf of death a well
the bucket cannot enter, the bucket that at home
once sliced into the darkness of the water

Spring Revealed

Not the inner springtime, the forbidden one, that of the house, born within, entering the streets, brief memories, eternal marks suddenly erased, dissolving the closed areas of parks, absorbing daffodils, in minute infernos, now long ago, not the springtime defined by specific smells, impossible to interpret, unless in the mutation of bodies, in the knowledge of the smallest furrows, in the future now explicit, in streets of columns undulating in the cold air, not that delayed springtime withheld in the future, but rather revelation seen again, the succession of waves, as when the first spring flowed over your body.

Then the Voice

Then the voice passed over
the ocean
and it was the sound of waves
the same sound heard in summers
when the light upon our skin
would turn to water

A prática da morte

De morte natural nunca ninguém morreu. — Jorge de Sena

Que amor não se explica? — Fernando Pessoa

O tema único é enfim a morte
natural de que nunca ninguém morre
mas como designar a morte de que
se morre? Natural afinal é
qualquer morte mas menos natural
quando na própria vida longamente
reside: é então como se o pássaro
do mito no corpo vivo o bico por castigo
usasse e infinitamente exercitasse
a sua fome abstracta numa vida reduzida
a pasto dessa ave; deixa de
haver passado e o presente
torna-se eterno pois imaginar
o fim e o princípio da nocturna catástrofe
é não só impossível como inútil podemos
meditar, olhando o olhar que nos
olha e implora não sabemos
que forma de silêncio, sobre temas
antigos por exemplo o sentido
da vida lugar continuamente percorrido
por aqueles para quem ela não tem sentido
ou se o corpo é a alma ali tão viva
de pouco servirá todavia
o desejo de com ideias reflexões e teorias
procurar entender, nada na vida
realmente se explica só imagens
(de noite ao luar no rio uma vela
serena a passar que é que me revela?)
algo revelam talvez todas sejam
simplesmente o aviso de que um dia
de morte natural as perderemos

The Art of Dying

No one dies a natural death. — Jorge de Sena

What love does not explain itself? — Fernando Pessoa

The only subject in the end is the natural
death from which no one ever dies
but how to designate the death from which
in fact we die? Natural in the end is
any death but less natural
when it has dwelt at length
in life itself: then it is as if the bird
of myth were to plunge its beak as punishment
into the living body and endlessly exercise
its abstract hunger in a life reduced
to nourishment for that bird; the past
ceases to exist and the present
grows eternal for to imagine
the end and the beginning of the nocturnal catastrophe
is not only impossible but also fruitless we could
meditate, gazing at the gaze that gazes
into us and implores we do not know
what form of silence, on ancient
themes for example, the meaning
of life a place constantly traversed
by those for whom it holds no sense
or if the body is the soul so living there
how little will the desire serve in any case
that with ideas reflections and theories
tries to understand, nothing in life
really explains itself only images
(at night in the moonlight on the river a sail
Serenely passes by, what does it then reveal to me?)
reveal something maybe all of them are
just a warning that through natural
death we will lose them all one day

A moeda do tempo

Distraí-me e já tu ali não estavas
vendeste ao tempo a glória do início
e na mão recebeste a moeda fria
com que o tempo pagou a tua entrada

Ramo

Talvez eu não consiga quanto amo
ou amei teu ser dizer, talvez
como num mar que tu não vês
o meu corpo submerso seja o ramo
final que estendo já não sei a quem

Time's Coin

I looked away and suddenly you weren't there
you had sold to time the glory of beginning
and then into your hand the cold coin fell
with which time paid you for your passage

Branch

Perhaps I will not come to say
how much I love or loved your being,
perhaps as in a sea beyond your seeing
my floating half-sunk body may
be reaching out a final branch
I no longer know to whom

Fibrillations

Ana Hatherly
Selected and translated
into English by K. D. Jackson

Translator's note: One of Portugal's most creative, experimental and inventive artists, poets, and authors, with 50 years of poetry, film, novel, and graphic works, Ana Hatherly composed the short book of meditative poems titled *Fibrilações* (*Fibrillations*) while in the hospital, after her health became very fragile. Philosophical exercises or variations, the poems possess the brevity and simplicity of observed or revealed truths, with the restlessness of a probing and quick spiritual consciousness.

To Whoever Wishes Me Well

How to jump out of my verses
and into your arms?
My poems are
the inaudible cry of a dream
(Sappho said so)

To wonder is to weigh
mountains of foam:

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The leap of the tiger
or the jump of the frog?
All is but different gesturing

Our task is to understand the world
so said the ancients
They well understood
that we are their game
(*the toys are us*)

The mirror broke
the frame remained
Now we see each other
furiously

The threat of fear
hovers over my breast
Fibrillating insistently
like sleepless eyelashes

The heart is a full-time
worker
it always opens and closes
the same doors
No one asks it if it wants to

Amid affliction
one drowns in the air
In a sea of unliquid waves
soundless like burning emeralds

I observe
a red rose
in a red vase
I see
the absolute red
of the absolute rose

What unconscious world is that
where the ending is
a white forgetfulness?
Timidly audacious
we flower into nothing

Travel without any baggage
Go where you are saved
and where you die
nothing substitutes for adventure

Memory is
where dreams go to sleep
Waking
they open windows in time.

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Portugal: Tales of Being and Not Being[1]

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

The Problem of the Past as Excess of Diagnosis

How much does the past weigh on the present and future of Portugal? This is not a specifically Portuguese problem. It concerns every peripheral and semi-peripheral country in the world system. The linear conception of time that prevails in Western Modernity, that is, the idea that history has a single direction, allows core or developed countries, which are for that reason located at the tip of the arrow of time, to define as backward all that is out of symmetry with them (Santos, "A Critique of the Lazy Reason"; Wallerstein, *The Politics of the World-Economy*). This is why only in core countries is the past not problematic, for it justifies and ratifies the success of the present.[2]

The problem of the past can, therefore, be defined as the set of representations of the historical conditions that in a given society explain the deficiencies of the present, formulated as backwardness vis-à-vis the present of the more developed countries. Given the historical duration of said conditions, difficulties in overcoming such deficiencies in the near future are to be expected. In the conditions of the modern world system, as conceived by Western social sciences, the problem of the past tends to be more serious given: a) the more widespread the social perception of the distance between the country in question and the more developed countries that serve as models; b) the more hegemonic the representation that such distance could and should be smaller; c) the more credible the idea that this has not been possible

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for internal causes or conditions.

In light of this, the problem of the past in Portugal cannot but be serious. Since Portugal was one of the first protagonists of the process—European expansion—that led to the development of developed countries today, it is not surprising that the distance that has separated her from these countries for the past three centuries is considered excessive, that people argue that it could be much smaller, and that, if it is not, this is mainly due to internal causes.

The problem of the past manifests itself as excess of diagnosis (Santos, *Pela mão de Alice* 49-67; Santos, "Entre Próspero e Caliban"). The excess of diagnosis consists in the reiteration of the same reasons to explain backwardness in many and different times and contexts. Let us look at a few examples.

On emigration:

> Many move on to foreign countries, mainly Castile, because of easy adjustment where before the Acclamation there were so many Portuguese that many affirmed that a fourth of the inhabitants of Seville were Portuguese-born [...] and throughout Old Castile and Estremadura it is well known that most of the workers came from this country, having moved there and making a living there by getting the work they couldn't find here. (Faria, "Dos remédios para a falta de gente" 129)

On commercial deficit (i.e., importation exceeds exportation) due to the country's insufficient production:

> Which one of us wears anything that is made in Portugal? We might say (and not for all of us) that only the linen and shoes are made by us. (Macedo, "Discurso sobre a introdução das artes" 174)

On the distance between the official and the real country:

> The country of reality, the country of hamlets, villages, towns, cities, provinces, must eliminate the nominal country, invented in offices, barracks, clubs, periodicals, and made up of the several layers of functionaries it is and wants to and will be. (Herculano, "Carta aos eleitores do círculo de Sintra" 320)

On the inefficiency of public administration and the arbitrary manner of deal-

ing with appointments for public office:

> It is unfortunate that more efforts and experiments go into choosing a good melon than a counselor or a minister. (Melo, *Apólogos dialogais* 104)

On the construction of means of transportation with no project for strengthening national production:

> When in Portugal we woke up for economic life, the locomotive's sharp whistle rose us from our historical slumber; by it stunned, we thought that all economic progress consisted in building roads and railway tracks. We forgot everything else. We didn't take into account that better highways might favor the outward current of indigenous products, but they would also favor the inward current of foreigners, thus internationally determining the conditions of competition for which we were not prepared and could not prepare ourselves. (Oliveira Martins, *Fomento rural e emigração* 89)

On public opinion and its relation with democracy:

> If democracy [...] is the control of the government by public opinion—the first, essential condition for democracy to exist is the existence of a conscious, well-organized public opinion—something nowhere to be found in Portugal. (Sérgio, *Ensaios I* 252)

After thirty years of democracy, how does the public space in Portugal work? The first observation is that it does not exist. Still to come is the history of that which, in this regard, opened up and almost constituted itself during the "revolutionary" years after the 25th of April, only to close down again, disappear and be replaced by the space of the media, which, in Portugal, constitutes no public space at all (Gil, *Portugal hoje: o medo de existir* 25).

On the political elites:

> In every field of human activity, the elites in Portugal are small: in no other realm, however, are we as poor as in politics. Actually, it is easily understood. The various parties never had any concern for mental values, any interest in our youth. Thus, what is most lucid about Portuguese thinking, the most wholesome and idealistic

> about the people's aspirations, is dispersed, vague and impotent, as mere nebula without a body, without influencing the facts, falling short of acting. (Sérgio, *Ensaios III* 27)

> And if everything unfolds without conflicts bursting, without consciousnesses screaming, it is because everything enters into the impunity of time—as if time brought along, immediately, in the present, the forgetfulness of what is there to be seen, present. How is this possible? It is possible because consciousnesses live in fog. (Gil, *Portugal, hoje: o medo de existir* 18)

What is astonishing in these passages is that the different diagnoses offered in the course of five hundred years are curiously appropriate for Portuguese society today. But, of course, they don't tell the whole story. It stands to reason that Portuguese society today is very different from what it was five hundred years ago, or one hundred years ago, for that matter. Hence, either the diagnoses provided in every epoch by the Portuguese cultural elites have been systematically wrong, or biased, perhaps saying more about the elites than about the country, or else Portuguese society has changed by virtue, or in spite of the conditions identified in the diagnoses. This disjunctive becomes clearer when we consider the diagnoses provided throughout the centuries by foreign observers, who now contradict, now corroborate the prognoses of the Portuguese.

I suspect we are in no condition to assert which alternative is the correct one. This much is certain: the possible correction of some of the diagnoses prevents the possible correction of some others. For instance, if it is true that the elites are, in general, distant from the people, hence incapable of imagining or formulating a coherent idea about the country, there is no reason to think that the cultural elites that make such an analysis are closer to the people than the ones that are the object of their analysis.

Under these circumstances, the diagnosis of the problem easily becomes the problem of the diagnosis. The problem of the diagnosis is not that it may be true or false, but that it is made at all, thus informing the dominant representations of a given society. The problem of the tradition is the tradition that gets created upon it. The more it asserts itself as *longue durée*, the more it will tend to convert itself in excess of diagnosis. In the Portuguese case, the problem of the diagnosis is particularly important because it involves other societies that shared with it, under unequal conditions, a vast, multisecular

contact zone—the colonial zone (Santos, "Entre Próspero e Caliban"; Santos and Meneses, *Identidades, colonizadores e colonizados*; Santos, *A gramática do tempo*). To what extent were these societies incorporated in the diagnoses? What were the consequences of such incorporation? Were they more affected by the consequences of the problems that were diagnosed, or by the consequences of the problem of the diagnosis? How did they interfere with one another? To what extent did the incorporation and the diagnosis, which were heteronymous for centuries, get accommodated in the realities of those societies? To what extent did they affect the latter's self-representation in the period right after the liberation from Portuguese colonialism? In other words, what is the postcolonial meaning of the diagnosed problems and of the problem of the diagnosis?[3]

I do not presume to answer these questions. I propose, rather, in this article, to reflect on the problems that give rise to them. I shall argue that the problem of diagnosis manifests itself through the coexistence of contradictory representations of very fast change and frozen immobilism. Such coexistence is the result of the specific insertion of Portugal in the modern world system—a semiperipheral country—and it also affects the societies that were subjected to Portuguese colonialism (Santos, *Pela mão de Alice*; Santos, "Between Prospero and Caliban"). Due to its long duration, such insertion created a complex palimpsest of temporalities and inter-identities involving both the European zone and the colonial zone. There are, however, certain historical moments in which the contradictions inhabiting this palimpsest surface with particular intensity and become a political question. In the last hundred years I distinguish two such moments which I call *the great moment of rejection* and *the great moment of acceptance.*

Unruly Representations: Portugal in a Broad Sense and Portugal in a Restricted Sense

Since the fifteenth century, Portugal has existed, as a bundle of social representations, in two zones or time-spaces simultaneously: the European zone and the colonial zone.[4] The notion of zone here aims to signify that, for five centuries, Portugal inhabited physically and symbolically much broader spaces than those of its territorial Iberian limits. Further, these spaces were very different from the realities that could be observed from within those limits. Therefore, we can speak of Portugal in a broad sense and Portugal in a restricted sense.[5] This discrepancy is at the origin of the excess of diagnosis:

Portugal in a restricted sense was always diagnosed from the standpoint of Portugal in a broad sense.

Through Portugal and Spain, the European zone created the colonial zone, but these two countries were central in Europe for only a very short period, and only in the nineteenth century did Europe fully realize the importance of the colonial zone, when Portugal and Spain had become quite peripheral in the European zone. The result is that Portugal lived most of the Modern age (the second Western Modernity) in a peripheral way, ever outside the center, whether of the European zone (because Portugal was present in the colonial zone when the colonial zone was peripheral for Europe) or of the colonial zone (because Portugal failed to keep a strong presence in the colonial zone when the colonial zone became central for Europe as a whole).[6] In the case of the colonial zone, not only did Portugal live in it outside the center, but also much longer than Europe. The colonial zone in which Portugal lived, besides being very large, lasted a long time. It allowed for the consolidation of a wide variety of relations, many of which can hardly be included in what after the nineteenth century, and until today, has been designated as European colonialism. Because it inhabited those zones in a peripheral way, however, Portugal could never fully assume the monoculture of linear time typical of the European zone referred to above. This conception has two important consequences. First, only in the more developed countries does the present ratify the past and render it unproblematic, which leads to the past being as unproblematic as the future, since all the conditions are met for success to continue: whoever goes ahead, precisely for that reason has in principle the capacity to avoid being replaced by the belated ones. The second consequence consists in the asynchrony between events and rhythms in core and peripheral or semiperipheral countries. By reason of such asynchronies, simultaneous events may well be noncontemporaneous. In the case of Portugal, not to be in the center meant lagging behind, and lagging behind, in turn, meant having a problematic past. And as a problem, the past became an inescapable part of the present. Under such conditions, historical evolution took the form of a palimpsest (Santos, "Os Processos da Globalização"), in which the different periods accommodated themselves in different and unpredictable forms, but never disappearing. The palimpsest offers itself to superficial readings of both ruptures and continuities.

The Palimpsest Woven of a Crazy Dance of Ruptures and Continuities

Societies are complex webs of communicating vessels where everything is connected to everything else. The myriad and often chaotic interactions among the different dynamics, rhythms, impulses and resistances in the multiple social fields go on defining relations and articulations among one another which, as they get stabilized, confer a logic—a measure—to the society as a whole. This is the measure that allows us to speak of developed, dynamic or progressive societies on the one hand, or, underdeveloped, stagnated or conservative ones, on the other. In all these types of societies, there are movements and changes; what varies is the rhythm and the direction. While in some all the movements converge with some coherence into a pattern, in others there are movements and counter-movements that neutralize one another, rapid changes together with strong resistances to change.

In the last three decades, Portuguese society underwent several rapid and turbulent processes of social change that had a strong, selective, and contradictory impact on different fields of social life. This impact has not yet consolidated into a new measure, that is, a new and coherent image of society, in which the Portuguese may recognize themselves in a consensual manner. The said processes were almost always processes of rupture, from the Carnation Revolution to decolonization, from fascism to democracy, from the transition to socialism to the transition to capitalism, from the intervention of the International Monetary Fund to integration in the European Union. In sociological terms, the image of change is even stronger after the entrance in the European Union. Here is a possible list of the main changes in no order of precedence: from sending out migrant workers to receiving them (African immigrants,[7] and later, Eastern Europeans) with the corresponding changes in the social and cultural outlook of the population; emergence of new forms of organization of civil society; increase of regional asymmetries and intensification of the process of territorial metropolitanization (Lisbon and Oporto) and, at the same time, intense development of urban areas in small and medium cities (for example, increases in services available and patterns of consumption); explosion in the purchase and use of micro-electronic products (in 1998, only the Scandinavians beat the Portuguese in cell phone use); increased access to higher education, particularly through inordinate proliferation of private universities; consolidation of public social security, followed almost immediately by deterioration; creation of a national system of science and technology; improved indicators of poverty, with a decrease

from 24% to 21% in relative poverty (percentage of resident population with income less than 60% of the national income); increased job precariousness (short-term contracts and career destructuring); increased unemployment of graduates; higher discrepancy between income and patterns of consumption, followed by the dramatic amount of debt taken on by families; paternity leave for fathers; culture as an increasingly significant area used by the State for political intervention, particularly in the municipalities; development of cultural industries, media production, and publicity, in part related to the privatization of television; emergence of new (or old, but not yet denounced) types of criminality, from organized economic crime to criminal associations, corruption, drug and weapons traffic, and pedophilia; increased participation of women in many sectors of (nonpolitical) social life, namely in the administration of justice; the impunity of the powerful apparently coming to its end; a wider gap between the citizens and the political system with the rise of abstention and poor referendum participation; increased mediatization of politics; and the emergence and consolidation of a new political force—*Bloco de Esquerda,* in which reproductive rights, racial and sexual discrimination and immigrants' rights become part of political discourse.

The conclusion may, therefore, be drawn that Portuguese society is a society in fast movement and transformation. But what is the rhythm, the measure and the direction of this movement and transformation? It is not easy to answer this question, for two reasons. On the one hand, the great changes implied processes of rupture, but such ruptures had distinct, if not opposite, political orientations. They created expectations that often remained unfulfilled and set in motion transformations that were often blocked. Thus, the ruptures co-existed surreptitiously with continuities, some of them centuries old. On the other hand, Portuguese society lives in the presence of a past time, however recent, of immobility and stagnation; hence, decadence, against which we imagine the emergence of a rival presence of a time of rupture and change. In the representation of the Portuguese, the time of immobilism is the time of fascism: Estado Novo,[8] dictatorship,[9] Salazar,[10] Cardinal Cerejeira,[11] PIDE,[12] overseas provinces,[13] censorship,[14] União Nacional,[15] colonial war,[16] *saudade*,[17] *fado, futebol* and *Fátima*,[18] "*a Bem da Nação*,"[19] Marcelo Caetano,[20] the National Feminine Movement (Movimento Nacional Feminino),[21] mild manners (*brandos costumes*),[22] proudly alone (*orgulhosamente sós*),[23] the most Portuguese village (*a aldeia mais portuguesa*),[24] peasant agriculture (*agricultura camponesa*), God, Fatherland and Family (*Deus, Pátria e Família*),[25] Por-

tuguese Youth (Mocidade Portuguesa),[26] Angola is ours (*Angola é nossa*),[27] woman-mother-and-wife (*mulher-mãe-e-esposa*),[28] family talks (*conversa em família*),[29] *Avril au* Portugal,[30] "People who wash (laundry) by the river" ("*Povo que lavas no rio*"),[31] copying and dictation (*cópia e ditado*),[32] serving maids (*criadas de servir*),[33] war godmothers (*madrinhas de guerra*).[34]

The time of change is, in turn, the time of the 25th of April,[35] liberty, democracy, decolonization, political parties, rallies, European Union, Zeca Afonso,[36] strikes, Coca-Cola, new school (*escola nova*),[37] Mário Soares,[38] democratic governance, Xico Fininho,[39] nationalizations, privatizations, short-term contracts, computers, video, cell phones, working and professional women, drugs, indebtedness, Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo,[40] Expo 98,[41] Siza Vieira,[42] discotheques, rural tourism (*turismo rural*),[43] Attorney General (Procuradoria Geral da República),[44] Eduardo Lourenço, José Saramago, the euro, local radio stations, internet, and *disk jockeys*.

Accordingly, Portuguese society could reasonably be seen as a society craving change or, on the contrary, as a society resisting change; as a society in vertiginous movement or, on the contrary, as a society frozen by vertigo. These two perceptions are deeply rooted in the Portuguese imaginary. And, to a certain extent, they are both illusory. That is, the time of Salazarism was not mere immobilism, nor was the time of the 25th of April mere change. If in the former time change occurred under the guise of immobilism, in the latter period immobilism may be occurring in the form of change. In the former time, change was socially devalued and occurred only anonymously and subterraneanly. Hence the reason why the 25th of April caught the great majority of the Portuguese by surprise. In the latter time, it is immobilism that is so socially devalued that it becomes unnamable and unrepresentable. Disavowal of immobilism is a disavowal as well as a breaking with it. The fact that the 25th of April is devalued and not taught in most schools does not mean that the rupture with the immobilism of the previous society is undervalued. Rather, what is devalued is the idea that the previous society ever existed in a different form that may be relevant for today's society.

Therefore, the conclusion may be drawn that for these reasons, distinct and even contradictory images of social change coexist in Portuguese society today. Where now is confirmed the atavist immobilism produced by the resistance of the "materials," now flourishes the extraordinary plasticity and lightness of collective existence. This is the political and vital constellation typical of a time of transition, a time-between-times, which is as well a time

of transition between places, between the European zone and the colonial zone. The crossing of perceptions makes it difficult to formulate a judgment or define a measure about the ongoing changes. What is more significant? That in less than twenty years Portuguese society made a profound demographic transition or in less than ten years a revolution in the consumption of micro-electronics? Or that it continues, like in centuries past, to train the least qualified labor force in Europe or prizing easy greed to the detriment of work and productive investment? Or that, as decades ago, the Portuguese State and particularly the Portuguese corporations allocate to research and development the lowest percentages of GDP in Europe? Is it more significant that Portugal went from a country of out-migration (including a strong component of "internal" migration to the colonial regions) to a country of incoming migrants (including a strong component of former colonial subjects)? Or that it continues to pay the lowest salaries in Europe?

By the same token, if some think that the changes will eventually drag along the continuities, others think that the continuities will end up boycotting the changes, or rendering them irrelevant. Curiously enough, and contrary to what one might think, these divergences do not intensify the emergence of strong political or cultural cleavages. The truth is that no Portuguese person or social group values change or continuity in every area of social life. If in some areas they value change, in others they value continuity. And since, in the great majority of the cases, both changes and continuities may have their positive and their negative aspects, some choose to see the negative facets while others focus on the positive ones.

To understand this palimpsest and grasp its meaning—as a problem of the past that asserts itself in the present as a specific way of seeing the future—we must analyze the relationship between the European and the colonial zone in the imaginary of the Portuguese society and in the imaginary of the societies colonized by it. As I mentioned above, the problem of the past emerges in Western Modernity as a result of the linear conception of time and the asynchronies it establishes between the countries that go ahead and those that lag behind history. If, for Portugal, the problem of the past is above all a problem of excess of diagnosis resulting from a structural belatedness vis-à-vis the central countries of the European zone, for the colonies and now former colonies, the problem of the past results from deviation from the colonial norm and manifests itself through the apparently contradictory coexistence of a deficit and an excess of colonization. The deficit manifests itself in a contradictory

way as well, whether being a burden resulting from being colonized by a backward country in the European context, or an opportunity for autonomous development, created precisely by the inefficiency of Portuguese colonialism. The excess resides in the fact that, given the near colonial subordination of Portugal to the central countries of Europe, England in particular, the colonies ended up suffering the impact of a double colonization, Portugal's and that of other European countries (again, England in particular). But even in this regard, this excess may have contributed to create opportunities for autonomous development. Since two *long-durée* time-spaces are in question, one must choose the moments when they can best clarify the problem of the past in this Portuguese-speaking time-space.

I believe the best moments are those in which the semiperipheral condition of Portugal was most contested, that is, when the semiperipheral socioeconomic condition became a political question. This change occurred in two opposite contexts. The first one was the *moments of rejection*, when the country felt rejected by the core European countries and hence apparently demoted in the world-system; the second one was the *moments of acceptance*, when the country felt accepted by the core countries and hence, apparently, promoted in the world-system. The most dramatic moment of rejection occurred at the end of the nineteenth century, with the Berlin Conference (1884-85) and the British Ultimatum (1890). The most dramatic moment of acceptance occurred at the end of the twentieth century with the April Revolution and integration in the then European Economic Community (1986).

At both moments, the relations between the European and the colonial zone were crucial. I shall designate the first moment, the moment of rejection, as *the European colonial moment* and the second, the moment of acceptance, as *the European neocolonial moment*. Portugal's performance at these moments will be of crucial importance, not only for Portuguese society but also for societies subjected to Portuguese colonialism. At the moment of rejection, the relations between the European and the colonial zone were particularly tense and dense. This was the moment when the central countries of the European zone turned the colonial zone into a privileged zone for the development of European capitalism. Portugal was seen then as an obstacle: since the country played no relevant role in the said project, the juridical control it held over vast African territories was a hindrance to having them available as colonial resources. At the moment of acceptance, the relations between the European and the colonial zone had deeply changed. For the core European

countries, the colonial zone had ceased to exist as such, having turned into a group of formally independent countries, integrated in transnational communities controlled by the former colonial powers (neocolonial integration). The anachronism of the Estado Novo in the European zone was double: as a dictatorship in a democratic Western Europe and as a peripheral European country that insisted on using violence to keep control over a colonial zone deemed obsolete. I will analyze both moments and identify disturbing parallelisms between them.

The European Colonial Moment (1890-1930)

There were other moments in previous centuries when Portugal experienced being rejected by developed Europe, but this was *the great moment of rejection.*[45]

Since the fifteenth century, practically all accounts of Portugal's historical existence and its becoming take as the starting point expansion (often also referred to as the point of arrival) followed by colonialism. Expansion is the founding myth of modern Portugal. That is to say, Portugal founds its presence in the European zone on its pioneering role in the constitution of the modern colonial zone. The colonial zone warranted Portugal's political independence in the European zone, while at the same time it prevented the formation of a national bourgeoisie and a national development project capable of securing a central presence in the European zone. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the diagnoses made in previous centuries focus, directly or indirectly, on the colonial zone.

The initial moment of expansion was a highly creative moment. It brought about a wide range of diverse possibilities—as vulnerable to fulguration as to all kinds of adventurism, as exhilarating as mediocre, vindicating *Os Lusíadas*[46] but also *O soldado prático.*[47] Such creativity allowed Portugal to be one of the protagonists of the first European modernity, the Iberian Modernity (Dussel, *Ética de la liberación*; Santos, *A gramática do tempo*). It will suffice to mention the Modernity of Pedro da Fonseca, the Portuguese Aristotle, and Suarez, as well as the Modernity of the *Conimbricences*, as they were known at the time.[48] The works of these two authors were taught throughout Europe. One of Pedro da Fonseca's works ran 36 editions and was read by Descartes and Leibniz (Fonseca). In other words, what came to be known as the first European Modernity, with Descartes and Kant, was in fact a second Modernity, the Modernity of Central Europe, which drew heavily

on Iberian Modernity. Iberian Modernity, because it featured countries that quickly went into decay, was not even considered as such in later centuries. To a large extent, Portugal lost this second Modernity through a long period of dependent insertion, which gave rise to what above I designated as a problem of the past.

One of the most dramatic proofs of this loss and subsequent subalternization of Portugal in the European zone was the Berlin Conference or "the scramble for Africa" (1884-85) and the British Ultimatum (1890), which denied Portugal's claim to keep under its jurisdiction the vast territories stretching between Angola and Mozambique in sub-Saharan Africa. The best place from which to analyze this moment is the colonies, considered to be the least important in the Portuguese colonial zone and which might even be considered for sale. In fact, in the course of the nineteenth century, there were suggestions of selling Mozambique and other colonies in the East to solve the country's serious financial crisis. (Oliveira Martins, *O Brasil e as colónias portuguesas*; Queiroz, *Uma campanha alegre*). In this article, I focus specifically on Mozambique.[49]

The division of Africa agreed upon at the Berlin Conference is eloquent proof of the subalternization of Portugal in the European zone.[50] The criterion for the division was no longer the historical right of discovery, claimed by Portugal, but that of effective occupation, favoring the colonial pretensions of the central European countries. The subalternization of Portugal reached its paroxysm with the Ultimatum, the ultimate moment of rejection. Portugal could not expect any effective solidarity on the part of the other European countries and was forced to surrender abjectly to England's imposition. On the eve of the Ultimatum, António Ennes wrote in his journal:

> England is going to settle herself inside our possessions. Surely, if we don't take special care, she will push us into the sea. To count on Europe, meaning Germany, to defend us is sheer absurdity. They would not raise a finger on our behalf. (*O 'Ultimatum'* xlix)

Right after the Ultimatum, he wrote:

> In the past couple of days, England has precipitated her diplomatic action and made it absolutely mandatory. She aimed her gun at our chest and counted the minutes. She would not give us time to take advantage of the good offices of

> the other powers, all of them having shown sympathy towards our claims. She planned matters in such a way that the mediation of some of them, at least, would find her sailors already in control of Lourenço Marques, Quelimane, S. Vicente, from where no one would expel them by force. In view of impending occupation, the government, afraid of having the country plundered, not only as regards the contested territories but also as regards Portugal's best overseas possessions, gave in to brutal force, protesting before the law and Europe's opinion. (*O 'Ultimatum'* 199)

The Ultimatum generated a vast wave of nationalism and debates over national identity, and provoked political turmoil that led to the resignation of several governments. On 11 June 1891, the Treaty with England was finally signed with all of England's pretensions met. Soon after, António Ennes was appointed Royal Commissioner of Mozambique (*Comissário Régio de Moçambique*).

I argue that António Ennes is unquestionably the most consequential colonial strategist at this European colonial moment; his colonial political philosophy and the vicissitudes of his actions are the best illustration of the dilemmas of Portugal's decentered position both in the European and in the colonial zone. Through him, Portugal tried fully to assume the European colonial enterprise in the space left available by England. Ennes sailed to Mozambique charged with the European colonial mission of establishing the frontiers and promoting the effective occupation of the territory, including its economic exploitation. His arrival in Mozambique marked the beginning of a new historical moment of Portuguese colonialism, the moment of Prospero,[51] the moment of the white man's *mission civilisatrice* vis-à-vis the African now portrayed as the savage, whose passage to civilization is the white man's burden.

In his first report, Ennes set the "sacred heirloom" idealism aside and, adopting a pragmatic style with affinities with British colonialism, drew an objective plan capable of taking advantage of the real potentialities of the colony and allowing for the corresponding, desirable benefits for the metropole.

The two main pillars of the hegemonic colonialism of the time, forced labor and racism, are central to Ennes's political proposal. Inveighing against the liberal legislation which applied freedom of labor to the natives of the colonies, he asks rhetorically: "When will we learn that the laws drawn for the Metropole are almost always inadequate for Africa?" (*Moçambique* 73). António Ennes is the best metaphor for a Portugal that struggles with the

need to prove its legitimacy as well as its capacity as a colonizing European power.

It did not take long for Ennes to realize that the conditions he encountered both in Mozambique and in the metropole made it impossible to carry out his plan and proposals. To begin with, there was no coherent and efficient colonial administration in Mozambique. Anarchy, arbitrariness, and corruption were the other side of an excessive centralization at the level of the Portuguese State, as he pointed out later on in his final report about Mozambique:

> On principle, it behooves the *Terreiro do Paço*[52] to rule the entire Portuguese world, but since the *Terreiro do Paço* cannot even handle the mere bureaucracy of so much glory, it delegates arbitrarily on the arbitrariness of the provincial authorities [...]. The first article of an Overseas Administrative Code [*Código Administrativo para o Ultramar*] is to choose the governors well; the second one, to support them or to dismiss them. (241)

In this report, António Ennes also highlighted the crucial role of financial investment and human resouces. As to the latter, he was fiercely against the centuries-old practice of sending convicted criminals to the colonies. Ennes contended that these poor elements only serve to stain the black man's image of the white man, undermining the image of elements of civilization and progress that the Portuguese should assume while representatives of the colonizing metropole. As to economic investment, and being aware of the country's limitations, Ennes advocated promoting the presence of foreigners capable of putting the wealth of the colony to its best use:

> This is why I say again and again: the colonial administration and public opinion both must stop fearing and being envious of foreigners when they need to deliberate on Mozambique. At the most, one must be careful to see that foreigners of every race and nationality whatsoever, and not one only, settle in the province. Up until now, this balanced mixture of elements has been spontaneously accomplished. (63)

Having defined, during his initial stay in Mozambique, the main lines of a successful colonial enterprise in the region, António Ennes sailed back to Mozambique in December of 1894, this time charged with broader political and administrative responsibilities in his capacity as Royal Commissioner. At that time there were almost no Portuguese troops in Mozambique to defend

the sovereignty that Portugal claimed before her European adversaries. Aware of this situation, the people of southern Mozambique, in alliance with the Gaza Empire—who in fact had never considered themselves vassals of the Portuguese—engaged in an offensive of such consequence that it almost reached Lourenço Marques, the main bastion that Portugal held in the coastal area of southern Mozambique. The village was forced to resort to its inhabitants to defend itself. In view of the seriousness of the situation, Portugal decided to send a contingent of military forces to occupy the region, thus justifying the Portuguese jurisdiction upon that area of the colony (Liesegang, *Ngungunyane*). The suspicion that the destabilizing hand of England was to be blamed—since England was actively engaged in negotiations with the Gaza Empire—cropped up frequently in the press. In the review *Occidente* of 11 October 1894, one read:

> The news was really alarming for it stated that the savages were ready to attack the city, where panic was rampant.
>
> This gesture of the savages indicates, with good reason, that it is the result of instigations of people interested in upsetting the order in Lourenço Marques, compromising Portuguese authority and sovereignty in that colony, all the more so because it coincides with the arrival in town of Cecil Rhodes who, as is well known, is committed to banish Portuguese sovereignty from that part of Africa.

But if England is the enemy whenever she puts Portuguese colonial rights at stake, she is the model to be followed whenever the issue is to consolidate colonial domination. Aires de Ornellas, then an officer of the Portuguese army that joined António Ennes and Mouzinho de Albuquerque, wrote upon his arrival in Mozambique:

> The blacks only dominate by force and since it is weak, we have to start at the beginning. First, we would have to force the blacks in the city and outskirts to what is convenient for us, without chaining or enslaving them, resorting merely to the means used by our next-door neighbors the English, showing them the strength of our muscles and the superiority of our race. (12)

The time had come to rationalize the African savannas (*sertões africanos*), to occupy and rule them, proving beyond a shred of a doubt that the claimed territories were "effectively" Portuguese, and not independent, sovereign

realms outside of Portugal's control. This is how the first colonial war started, then called "pacification campaigns" ("campanhas de pacificação") (Santos and Meneses, *Identidades, colonizadores e colonizados*). Submission through war and forced labor are sustained ideologically by racism. The greater the foreseen resistance, the more vicious the racist ideology. Of the Nguni people, whose leader was Ngungunyane (also the leader of the Gaza Empire), Ennes wrote:

> There is a people in particular, the *vátua* [then the Portuguese nomenclature for the nguni], that civilization will have to treat as an irredeemable enemy, for they render infertile the soil they tread. They are the noblemen of savagery. For them work is dishonor, murder glory, and pillage law. (*Moçambique* 23)

The submission of Ngungunyane in successive battles during 1895 was seen as the ransom for Portuguese colonialism and Portugal's stand in Europe. Africa became again the way to Europe. Euphoric from the victories obtained by his troops, Ennes wrote:

> We know how to fight and are capable of fighting in Africa, today as in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and we will preserve intact the dominion earned with so much effort by our ancestors. (*A guerra de África* 93)[53]

The review *Occidente* of 25 November 1895 clearly showed the Portuguese Prospero's concern to impress Europe, proving that he was a totally legitimate Prospero:

> We therefore proudly underscore this feat of arms that has so much impressed Europe, particularly those countries that know by their own experience how much it has cost them to maintain campaigns on African soil.

The military victories allowed for comparisons with the English colonial norm. It was thus no longer important to invoke the specificities of Portuguese colonialism, which before were invoked positively as proof of moral victory. The idea of a reluctant Prospero is evident in the following passage published in the review *Occidente* on 11 March 1891, where the Portuguese colonial vocation ("a vocação colonial portuguesa") is contrasted with British colonialism:

> Compare this English civilization with the civilization that Portugal has been spreading in her colonies, and you will easily find an explanation for the aversion of the indigenous peoples to the English, in eloquent contrast with their respect and spontaneous affection for the Portuguese.

António Ennes's plan came to symbolize the moment of the European Prospero, not a reluctant Prospero, but rather an arrogant Prospero, according to whom imperial violence—physical and epistemological imperial violence—against the "other," now turned into a savage native, was fully legitimized by history and ethics. In his writings, Ennes reaffirmed the imposition of metropolitan Portugal's sovereignty on the colonial space as a lever to dominate the "indigenous element," which must be educated and forced to convert to Western values. At the same time, this colonial imposition was meaningful to Ennes as a moment of Portugal's integration in the imperial European space. The colonialist racism he defended caused a profound change in the chaotic identity negotiations that until then had prevailed among the Portuguese, the natives, and other foreigners in the territory. The complex heterogeneity of identifications was suddenly reduced to two main homogeneous and antagonistic categories: white as colonizer and black/indigenous as the colonized. For some purposes, the categories were three: the white settlers, the natives, and the assimilated, i.e., those who had given proof of having assimilated Portuguese, European values.

However, António Ennes soon came to realize that the pacification campaigns, no matter how successful, did not manage to overcome the structural problems resulting from the Portuguese presence in that part of the colonial Empire.[54] In Ennes's opinion, beyond the glaring administrative deficiencies and the central government's incompetence, any colonizing action would be impossible if the white race could not prove its superiority and impose its effective presence, now that race had been introduced as a determinant factor in the definition of Portuguese citizenship. In 1896, while Royal Commissioner, he stated about Mozambique:

> At a stone's throw from the capital,[55] the country is the same as two or two hundred kilometers away: it is a savage country, perhaps with the only difference that its inhabitants know more Portuguese vices and words. (*A guerra de África* 42)

The negative reactions of the rather small local white bourgeoisie to his

performance and the obtuseness of the government in Lisbon (which expected resounding results from minute investments) provoked in him a deep disenchantment and led him to the conclusion that a Portuguese colonial state, similar to the one that Cecil Rhodes was building in the nearby countries (almost as "private" colonies, similar to the Belgian Congo), was not viable. On 27 June 1895, he wrote to his daughter:

> Once I manage to get off, I will pronounce my public life finished. I do not want to be anything else in this decaying country! [...] It's all rotten! [...] You can't rule with such people. You can't make anything out of them. (Caetano 104)

In a way, the same would happen with another high-ranking colonial administrator, Mouzinho de Albuquerque, the most violent version of the Portuguese Prospero. In Ennes's wake, though competing with him, Mouzinho de Albuquerque, the "jailer of the Lion of Gaza," fully meant to accomplish the moment of the colonialist Prospero. After a sojourn in India, Mouzinho became a fervent admirer of British colonialism. Like Ennes, Mouzinho aimed to decentralize the colonial administration, which until then was under the direct control of the *Terreiro do Paço*, as mentioned earlier. He was supportive of "indirect rule" that facilitated the relations between the metropole and the colonies, as can be seen in the quote below:

> Let us compare these administrations—with so little bureaucracy—these countries—so little dependent on officialdom—with any Portuguese colony, shackled by numberless laws, decrees, regulations, and commands sent off randomly from a metropole worn out by a plethora of public officials, in general badly paid and worse chosen in Lisbon, made busy by writing minutes, copying, and sending off numberless memos, duplicates, triplicates, circulars, etc., most of them totally dispensable! (*Moçambique* 68)

When Mouzinho arrived in Mozambique in September of 1890 to take the position of general governor of the Lourenço Marques district,[56] he was shocked by the absence of any effective occupation. Later on, in his report of the campaign against the *namarrais* in northern Mozambique, he wrote:

> Our ignorance of the territory where we were to intervene was unbelievable. The

> instability, lack of zeal and aptitude, and particularly the complete indifference of the general governors resulted in that the vast majority of the military commands had no idea of the ground a kilometer away from the seats of command. (*A campanha contra os namarraes* 5)

In the same way as António Ennes, Mouzinho despaired at the depressing state of the district administration and was outraged at the liberal idea of the equality of every citizen, including the natives. According to him, this idea was "utterly absurd." Later, while appraising the first segregationist administration of the indigenous populations, Eduardo da Costa, another participant of the *campanhas*, wrote that Mouzinho thought that such a law represented "*the main step towards an administrative system adequate to the stage of civilization of the indigenous peoples*" (Costa 598).

Mouzinho represents the most violent, racist and nationalist version of Prospero's colonialism. Whereas António Ennes, about to leave Mozambique, thought that Ngungunyane was politically neutralized after the pacification campaigns carried out under his supervision, Mouzinho insisted on pushing the defeat of the Gaza Empire to the bitter end and, moreover, humiliated Ngungunyane in front of the settlers and the natives themselves. Against Ennes's advice, he apprehended the *nguni* leader in Chaimite, a move that, in the aftermath of the Ultimatum, transformed Mouzinho into a national hero. The extreme degradation to which Mouzinho subjected Ngungunyane was explicitly designed to be the symbol of the complete submission of the savages to the civilized. For him, the savages were a homogeneous category, with no allowance for the past identity differences and heterogeneities. Having commanded Ngungunyane to sit down on the floor, at the latter's refusal to do so because the floor was dirty, Mouzinho shouted: "you are no longer a 'régulo' of the mangonis, you are a matonga like any other" (Mouzinho de Albuquerque *Livro das campanhas* 26),[57] thus striping Ngungunyane not only of his leadership role but also his ethnic identity.[58]

At the zenith of his prestige, Mouzinho was appointed Governor General of the colony, replacing Ennes. He set out to accomplish the effective occupation of the territory, forcing to suppress all the *régulos*—local leaderships—so as to eliminate any idea of political autonomy. His vision concerning the native populations was guided exclusively by the interests of the colonizer. For example, the consumption of wine, which stirred so much criticism in the evolving press of the assimilated, was welcomed by Mouzinho for contribut-

ing to the "nationalization" of commerce:

> The wine for consumption of the locals—regular white wine heavily loaded with brandy—has become quite popular in the market, and many of the natives prefer it today to sope [local brew, made of cereal alcohol with water]. From the point of view of the nationalization of commerce, and since this wine is so abundant in the country and is not sold in Europe, the use of it by the blacks is highly convenient. (Mouzinho de Albuquerque, *Moçambique* 101)

Probably influenced by British colonialism, Mouzinho extended his racist and xenophobic attitudes to the black Muslims and other Asians present in Mozambique, now classified as inferior races of Moors and Indians (Santos and Meneses), advancing severe measures to have them replaced by white Portuguese.

But again the attempt to fulfill the European Prospero mission in Africa led to disappointment. His government soon became controversial, whether because of the violence he used in subordinating the indigenous peoples or, above all, because of his demands of autonomy from the Lisbon government, following the nearby example of Cecil Rhodes. Faced with the central government's refusal to grant him a large loan to develop the colony, Mouzinho resigned in 1898. In a long letter addressed to his subordinates, he inveighed against the evils of the direct administration of the colonies by the central government. The King, who always admired him, charged him with the education of Prince Luís Fílipe. In 1900-1901, in a letter addressed to the prince, Mouzinho bitterly vented his frustration:

> Everything is small in this Portugal of ours nowadays! The sea is no longer the corral of our ships, but rather pasture for foreign battleships; more than three parts of the overseas Empire are gone and God knows what painful surprises the future harvests for us. (*Carta*)

Misunderstood in his defense of a military dictatorship capable of crushing the rising Republican threat, and perhaps for other unknown reasons, Mouzinho committed suicide on 8 January 1902. This is what Raul Brandão wrote about the suicide in his memoirs:

> [Mouzinho] brought from Africa the inordinate dream of a greater Portugal and

> believed he would find in the *Paço* and the King the necessary support to fulfill it. He clashed with the Court and the politicians, with the stubborn force of mediocrity and inertia. [...] Mouzinho's death is explained by this collapse of a creator of misunderstood and discarded heroism. (145)

The failures of António Ennes and Mouzinho de Albuquerque in putting into practice the colonial project in Mozambique cannot be explained by the idiosyncrasies of their political personalities. We have to go deeper than that. First, their not being understood reveals the absence of a national project for incorporation in the European colonialist project of this period. Conceived in Lisbon, the incorporation was always reactive, focused more on the past (based on historical rights) than the future, and setting as a goal the continuation of the sporadic, immediatist, and adventurist exploitation of the colonies. Unlike England, Portugal had no bourgeoisie interested in or capable of putting the colonies at the service of her development in the European zone. Ennes and Mouzinho were no more than two self-appointed Prosperos for a nonexistent, impossible mission. Portugal's semiperipheral position in the European zone precluded a new centrality in the colonial zone. The Lusitanian Prospero, besides incompetent, was in this period a reluctant Prospero as well. Once assured of his independence, no matter how precarious and formal, what was meant by the national project was fulfilled. Antero de Quental identified the fragility of this stance with crystal-clear lucidity. A few days after the Ultimatum, he wrote in *A província*:

> Either Portugal will reform itself politically, intellectually, and morally or she will cease to exist. But reform, to be fecund, must start from deeply within our own collective being: it must be, above all, a reform of sentiments and manners. (*Política* 220)

In a different context, he adds sorrowfully:

> There is a whole humanity in dissolution from which a living, wholesome, believing and beautiful humanity must be drawn [...]. However, who speaks and knows nowadays in Europe is not Portugal or Lisbon, it is Paris, London, Berlin. (*Prosas* 330-31)

Prospero's reluctance is due to one more reason, also important to under-

stand the failures of these two self-appointed Prosperos. Focusing exclusively on the future of Portugal and the inclusion of the colonies in this future, they made *tabula rasa* of the complex social, political, and cultural interactions that the Portuguese had been engaged in, not only with the local populations but also with all those who arrived in these places for shorter or longer stays. Without a colonial state or an empire to support them, the Portuguese were, under different circumstances, lords and vassals, "wives" of African kings, merchants in war and peace trading with the many peoples circulating in these regions, cafreal-ized Portuguese in the African savannas (*sertões africanos*), forgetful of their culture of origin and living comfortably according to the local customs. The multisecular presence of these Portuguese was crossed by the presence of the Swahili societies in northern Mozambique, with the Makhwa people, among many, as well as the Asiatic peoples from the Indian subcontinent. All these crossings resulted in a complex and labyrinthic constellation of inter-identity. It was not to be expected that the *tabula rasa* politics could easily eliminate and reduce it to the racist colonial classification of white/colonizer and black/colonized. This was a colonial zone in which colonialism coexisted with noncolonialism, in which relations of colonial nature were intermixed with relations of different natures (Prestholdt; Santos and Meneses). Moreover, the liberal ideology of equality had created roots among the native populations that claimed the right to be Portuguese and watched resentfully as culture was being replaced by race, particularly when the race said to be superior was witnessing daily its own cultural inferiority.

The European Neocolonial Moment (1974-)

The European neocolonial moment is the great moment of acceptance of Portugal in developed Europe. Again, it is a moment of great social and political turmoil for, once again, Portugal sees her position in the European zone tied to her position in the colonial zone. At the moment of rejection, at the end of the nineteenth century, the affirmation of a central position in the European zone required an effective colonization in the colonial zone. At the moment of acceptance, the peripheral position inside the European zone is taken as transitory, the promotion to the center implying, among other things, an effective decolonization, which, in the hegemonic logic of the European zone, meant the effective creation of a neocolonial zone. If the moment of rejection confirmed that Portugal had lost the train of the second European Modernity, the moment of acceptance raises the question of whether Portugal may now

catch the train of the period following the second Modernity.

The twenty-year period between May 1968 and the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marks really the end of the second European Modernity and the beginning of a long paradigmatic transition to a third Modernity, or a transmodernity, or a postmodernity—the name is of little importance here. At this moment of acceptance, does the fact that Portugal had a peripheral place in the second Modernity determine her performance in the center of the European zone in a period of paradigmatic transition?

In the period that marked the end of the second European Modernity—1968-1989—three mega-events occurred in Portugal: the Revolution of the 25th of April; the end of the colonial empire and, in a relatively brief period in 1975, the arrival of more than half a million Portuguese citizens mainly born in the colonies (the "retornados") returning from the former African colonies; and, finally, Portugal joining the European Union. The meaning of these events is open, but it would not be far-fetched to think that, through them, Portugal tried to solve the debit-credit of her first Modernity. She did it in the same period that developed Europe was closing down its accounts of the second Modernity and opening up the time for a new modernity, albeit uncertain. Therefore, in Portugal and Europe, the transitions coincided, but they were certainly from different realities and toward new realities that only most willfully could be imagined as converging in the short term. This asynchrony has a long duration but is not subject to any iron determinism. Indeed, the convergence policies of the European Union, and the structural and cohesion funds were imagined as a generous and efficacious political-economical device to allow Portugal a short circuit: to fulfill, in a few decades, her second Modernity to the full, something that had taken the developed European countries two centuries to accomplish. Thus, Portugal would coincide, with only a slight delay, with the rest of Europe in the tasks of transition toward the new modernity, transmodernity or postmodernity.

The fact that this has not happened and probably won't happen in the short term does not affect the crucial importance of the changes in this latter period at all. Through these changes, Portugal became the only European country that has had the opportunity to ground its identity anew in the course of its historical trajectory, and indeed embrace a new founding myth. The myth of expansion is followed by the myth of Europe, a century after the refoundation proposed by Antero de Quental. For a long time, the first myth will prevail, while the second will be merely emergent, but the transmyth-

ification movement seems to be apparent. In socio-cultural terms—not to mention economic and political dimensions—this is a particularly complex process. At the great moment of rejection, the myth of expansion provided an imaginary that allowed Portugal to "do without" Europe because she had her colonies.[59] At the great moment of acceptance, the myth of Europe provides an imaginary that allows Portugal to "do without" the colonies because she is Europe.

What is at stake may be easily illustrated. While the colonial zone granted the independence of Portugal in an emergent Westfalian Europe but did not permit her to have a national project of development for lack of a national bourgeoisie, the European Union confirms the independence, reshaping it in a postwestfalian context, and replaced the absence of a national project with the national incorporation in a transnational project. The independence that expansion made possible was structurally precarious, from the Treaty of Metween (1703) to the French invasions (1807-1810) and the British Ultimatum (1890). It is beyond one's imagination to have the capital of the Empire transferred to the main colony (Brazil) for survival's sake. In the European Union, the precariousness of independence took another form, subjected to a more genuine pact.

As to the national development project, apparently the European Union released Portugal of a historical burden: under the new conditions created by the European Union, Portugal, where there never was a bourgeois revolution, needed no longer to worry about the negative consequences of such a lack. The 25th of April, which in a way created the political conditions for a national bourgeoisie to flourish, occurred at a moment when the time for national bourgeoisies, as political actors, had gone. The Portuguese bourgeoisie that did support the 25th of April was the internationalized bourgeoisie and had no power to stop the nationalizations. When it reconstructed itself, it was even more internationalized and only waiting for the European Union. In the European Union, Portugal has and will always have businessmen and workers, capital and labor, but she does not have nor will ever have a national bourgeoisie as a coherent, credible and efficacious political actor. This bourgeoisie is torn between a fully internationalized sector, for which the Portuguese state is too small to do more than facilitate the large investments and mitigate taxing and social benefits expenses; and a national sector for which the Portuguese state is too large to be politically manipulated, no other means of manipulation remaining but small and medium corruption

and fiscal evasion.[60]

The signs of ongoing changes point to some disturbing parallelisms to what happened at the great moment of rejection. I highlight two of them. In both, the incorporation of Portugal in a transnational project of capitalist development is at stake. At the moment of rejection, it was the European colonial project; at the moment of acceptance, it was the project of European integration, which presupposes the elimination of the colonial zone and, hence, neocolonialism. In both moments, the successful integration in the transnational presupposes the existence of a national project of incorporation and the economic and political capacity to carry it out. As we saw, that did not exist at the moment of rejection, and António Ennes lived that lack more painfully than anybody else. As a consequence, Portugal was unable to colonize her colonies efficiently and take from there the profit anticipated by colonialist Europe. Likewise, at the moment of acceptance, Portugal did not decolonize in the European way (that is, the British way), meaning that the independence of the Portuguese colonies occurred in a political context that did not allow for the continuation of the neocolonial tutelage. At any rate, Portugal lacked the economic resources to carry out any effective neocolonial policy. Given her incapacity to manage the continuation of the colonial relation with her former colonies, Portugal decided to forget that she had had colonies. The myth switching I spoke of above—from the myth of expansion to the myth of Europe—is the symbolic mark of this process of concealment. It is significant that the two principal moments or processes of independence in the Portuguese imperial cycle occurred alongside profound political changes in the Portuguese society: the liberal revolution, in the case of Brazil, and the revolution of the 25th of April, in the case of the African colonies and East Timor. East Timor is actually the country that most dramatically illustrates the Portuguese helplessness at the European neocolonial moment. Portugal was unable to prevent both the unilateral declaration of independence by FRETILIN[61] and the subsequent invasion of the country by Indonesia, in spite of being still, according to international law, the administering power. More shockingly, when compared to Africa, Portugal literally fled from Timor.

Following the 25th of April 1974, Portugal turned to Europe as if ashamed of her colonial past and looked suspiciously upon the continuation of any kind of significant relations with the newly independent countries. The positions defending such a continuation—whether neocolonial or postcolonial—

were pejoratively considered third-world-like positions. This accounts for two intriguing phenomena. On the one hand, in the process of joining the European Union—and unlike what had happened with France and England—the Portuguese negotiators omitted any mention of the historical responsibility vis-à-vis the new African countries liberated from Portuguese colonialism ten years before. On the other hand, in a few years, Portugal lost her expertise in tropical science and does not have today the critical mass of scholars on African topics, even though she managed to accomplish precisely that as far as European subjects go.

At the time of colonial expansion, Portugal set in motion a process whose movement she could not keep up with, as was demonstrated at the great moment of rejection. Five centuries later, while refounding her Modernity, Portugal entered an ongoing project that has its own course. If neocolonial decolonization was not possible, neither does it seem possible, at least in short- or medium-term, to accomplish the full integration of Portugal in the European Union—meaning the promotion of Portugal from a semiperipheral position to the center of the world system. The ancestral absence of a project for national development, which made Portugal miss the train of the second Modernity and squander the moment of effective colonization, is now reflected in the absence of a national project for integration in the transnational project of the European Union.

Apparently, the European Union represents the end of the multisecular absence of a project. At long last, Portugal is part of a real project that in many respects transcends her present, and has clear objectives and a plan with methods and strategies to attain them. Besides, it is a hegemonic project, that is, a project that stirs up the widest consensus in Portuguese society. The conditions seem therefore to be created for Portugal in a broad sense to stop worrying about Portugal in a restricted sense. I believe, however, that the European project, at least so far, is one more version of the absence of project. To be sure, joining the European Union changed Portuguese society profoundly, and more often than not, the change was for the better. It seems to me, however, that up until now these changes have been assumed less as part of a project judiciously adopted than as the fortunate result of new routines imposed from the outside. Portugal, it seems, is in the European project, but is not yet a European project. Similarly, Portugal was in the colonies without being an effective colonizer. Now, as then, Portugal is in a place, but outside the hegemonic norm of being there. I do not mean this is a deficit

alone. Portugal is not yet the European project perhaps because she welcomes experiences, sociabilities, and cultures that transcend the European project. What is less than Europe may well be more than Europe. Likewise, the fact that she was not an effective colonizer also meant the possibility of weaving noncolonial relations inside the colonial zone. Being short of the colonizer also meant to be beyond the colonizer. This is a way of being that is as intense as it is furtive.

This continuity is clearly expressed in the adventurism that characterizes the way in which the structural and cohesion funds[62] were utilized, in many respects mirroring the adventurism that characterized the way in which the colonies were explored. In the colonies, the Portuguese were almost always adventurers and few times settlers. They explored avidly and greedily the easy and easily available wealth, but rarely did they settle down to value the local natural resources with labor and technology and multiply them in projects of sustainable development, as we would say today. In this regard, some differences between the two Iberian colonizers must be registered. Whereas in Spanish America twenty-three universities were founded between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Portuguese colonies had to wait for the nineteenth century, or even for the second half of the twentieth century (as was the case of Mozambique and Angola) to inaugurate their universities, to which only a very small percentage of African students had access.

Concerning the structural and cohesion funds, they were allowed to become easy prey for corruption, burying them in cement and concrete rather than putting them at the service of the educational, scientific and technological turn that would allow Portugal to take possession of the European project as its own. As a result, Portugal is in the European project more as a guest than as a host. Entrance in the European Union is, to date, one more version of the absence-of-project-turned-into-its-own-project.

For this reason, the absence-of-project-turned-into-its-own-project is what best characterizes the present in-between time, a time of adjustment among palimpsests of historical and symbolic sedimentations. Such absence is made of enormous plasticity that allows for its transfiguration both in stasis and in change. Its two, apparently opposite, transfigurations are "routine as realism" and "quixotism." "Routine as realism" consists of renouncing the changing reality given the impossibility of changing it in a consistent and planned way. The consistent and planned change of reality requires a project; without a project, routine is the best insurance against the uncertain future.

It is astonishing how, in the last thirty years, so many ancestral routines have been kept and others have been swiftly created, only cosmetically distinct from the ones that preceded them—in the parliament and newspapers, in the universities and factories, in public office and in the government, in the family and in the streets. Against the project, method, rigor and accountability, the routine is the government of what is known for its own sake, facile letting go. Uncertain routine is a form of accountability hardly distinguishable from unaccountability and impunity.

This kind of pedestrian realism is one of the longest durations of Lusitanian collective existence. It is largely portrayed in the reports of António Ennes and Mouzinho de Albuquerque as well as in all of those people that shared with them the project of the European colonial Prospero. Pedestrian realism, however, does not exist without that other manifestation of the absence of project turned project of itself: quixotism. Quixotism resides in fulgurations, casual interruptions of routines, almost always translated into unbalanced measures or interventions. The process that led to joining the European Union is full of quixotisms: no transition processes were negotiated that might allow for safeguarding the conditions of the Portuguese economy to compete in a much larger market; the specificity of small-holding agriculture was not defended, in spite of its traditional importance in Portugal.[63] More recently at the beginning of the new millennium, there were other eloquent manifestations of quixotism. One of them consisted in the obsession to control the budgetary deficit. Given the weakness of the Portuguese economy, such a policy was a quixotic affirmation of exaggerated and unfocused loyalty to the European project, a kind of loyalty that would be rather laughable if the Portuguese economy was host rather than guest of the European project.[64] The result was economic recession and retrogression as regards convergence with the European average. Another manifestation of quixotism was the enthusiastic support of the then Prime Minister Durão Barroso to the invasion of Iraq against the position of the hard-core European Union, the France-Germany axis. In this case, loyalty fell short but, paradoxically, it revealed the same outsidedness vis-à-vis the European project. A small country with convergence problems, were she to take the European project seriously and make it her own, should have interest in aligning herself with Europe's hard-core, especially when supported by public opinion. However, the opposite happened. Unable to reconcile herself with her mediocrity, Portugal decided to ride a vaster project than the European Union, the Atlantic Union. As if to take revenge on

Europe for being too big for the *Portugal dos Pequenitos* (kindergarten Portugal), Portugal wanted to show that she is too big for the *Europa dos Pequenitos* (kindergarten Europe). Too weak for such a grandiose ride, Portugal ended up on the margins of both unions, metaphorically in the Azorean archipelago. Perhaps the performances of António Ennes and Mouzinho de Albuquerque, which were disengaged from a consistent colonial project, prove themselves to be manifestations of quixotism.

In Portugal, swift social change seems to occur under the aegis of structural immobilism, that is to say, under conditions that do not allow for qualitative upgrading—full convergence with the measure of European development. The rhythm of change is determined by external factors: in the eighteenth century, the discovery of mines in Brazil; in the nineteenth century, the independence of Brazil and the Ultimatum; in the last decades, the independence of the African colonies and East Timor and the European structural and cohesion funds.

Conclusion

Having emerged as a modern society at the intersection of the European zone and the colonial zone, excelling in circulating symbolically inside and outside each one of them, building throughout the centuries a complex palimpsest of temporalities and inter-identities, Portuguese society is not easily grasped by conventional analyses. Apparently exposed to less demanding eyes, Portuguese society is indeed a furtive object of analysis. It offers itself without resistance to very disparate and even contradictory readings, readings that are all plausible to a certain extent. Thus, a reading that is to a certain extent plausible may actually be as arbitrary as another reading, considered to be implausible. An example might help. One of the most popular readings of Portuguese society in recent times is José Gil's *Portugal, hoje: o medo de existir* [*Portugal, Today: The Fear of Existing*]. Gil defines Portugal as the country of non-inscription, the country in which nothing happens that may inscribe a mark on history or individual existence, in social life or in the realm of art (15). One of his first examples is the way in which the Revolution of 25 April 1974 dealt with the Estado Novo dictatorship, by contrasting it with what happened in Germany with Nazism. Says Gil:

> [...] the 25th of April refused, in a completely different way [than the Germans] to inscribe in the real the forty-eight years of Salazarist authoritarianism. Neither the Pides nor members of the old regime were ever brought to trial. On the

> contrary, an ample pardon concealed as under a veil the repressive, castrating, humiliating reality whence we came [...]. Thus were obliterated from consciousnesses the crimes, the culture of fear and mediocre littleness engendered by Salazarism. (16)

Setting aside the problematic nature of the comparison[65] and the analytical apparatus used to carry it out (psychoanalysis), Gil is clearly right in what he asserts. But does even an endless accumulation of such examples prove that the Portuguese society is a society of non-inscription? I do not think so. First of all, Gil grounds his analysis on a synchronic, nonsystematic comparison with other European countries, as well as a diachronic comparison with Salazar's Portugal. Now, it has not been demonstrated that the European inscription norm (if such a thing exists) is the only one. Could there be other, more furtive ways of inscription? On the other hand, Gil focuses on Portugal in a restricted sense, the country at the corner of the Iberian peninsula, and does not go further back than fascism in his history. This means not only that Portugal in a broad sense is absent from his analysis, but that all the inscription work made by the Portuguese throughout the centuries in the most remote places of the world is absent as well. Or could it be that there was no inscription in the colonial zone?

If we start from the two ideas I identified above, the furtive nature of the multisecular presence of Portuguese society, both in the European and the colonial zone, and the idea of the labyrinthic palimpsest of temporalities and inter-identities that constitutes it, we will feel compelled to search for the inscription in a broader and less conventional manner. Then, I suspect, our harvest will be abundant and surprising.

By way of illustration, let me give an extreme example of furtive inscription. It is remote in space and not at all conventional as to the material upon which it inscribed itself. Melville and Frances Herskovits, two well-know North American anthropologists, are considered the founders of African-American studies, that is, the study of diasporic Africa. This is partly due to the works they published on their famous expedition into the Saramaka maroon people of Suriname, in the late 1920s. The Saramaka maroons are descendants of rebel slaves who escaped to the South American rain forest in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and built a vibrant African-American culture and society. The Herskovitses interpret their findings as proving the African characteristics of the Saramakas. Two of them concern language.

The Herskovitses report an African word used by the canoeists—*mfundu*—which they say means "deep." They also quote a local proverb in which the word *buli* appears, and which they transcribe according to African phonology as *gbuli*. These and several other data are used by the American anthropologists to confirm the African roots of the Saramakas. However, more recent and far more rigorous studies have proven that, in fact, *mfundu* comes from the Portuguese *fundo* and that the phoneme *mf* does not even exist in the Saramaka language. It has also been proven that *buli* comes from Portuguese *bulir* ("to stir up"), exactly the meaning it has in the said proverb, which had actually already been registered by a Moravian missionary in 1778. This means that, right in the twentieth century, one of the indicators of the African origins of a people of runaway slaves living in the most remote tropical jungle of the Americas is, after all, a mark of the Portuguese language, inscribed in the everyday life of these peoples since the seventeenth century.[66]

What stronger form of inscription could one imagine? Evidently, this is not the kind of inscription Gil has in mind or chooses to consider relevant. But it seems to me that his option is what needs to be questioned. What prevents the capacity for inscription of the Portuguese from being tested in the everyday life of other peoples and not just the everyday life of the Portuguese? What prevents the appropriation (whether voluntary or forced) of the Portuguese culture or language by many other peoples from counting as inscription, in spite of the great impact the Portuguese and other peoples that crossed paths with them had on their life and history? And if nothing prevents this, why should the comparison of the Portuguese with other Europeans limit itself to Portugal in a restricted sense? In other words, why doesn't Portugal in a broad sense fit into Portugal in a restricted sense? And vice versa?

This example also shows that, in a society marked by the excess of diagnosis, the most arbitrary reading can be the most convincing one as well. The huge success of José Gil's book indicates as much. The verisimilitude of his narrative resides in the coincidence between the analytical scale he selects—Iberian Portugal since the Estado Novo—and the way in which Portuguese society is living, since 1974, the great moment of acceptance, the European neocolonial moment. This analytical scale, whose selection is arbitrary in itself, is congenial and obvious because it coincides with the perception of the Portuguese that, as condition of their European acceptance, they need to forget all they were (and supposedly no longer are) outside the European zone. This includes, of course, Portugal's more long-lasting and dispersed contacts

with more peoples and cultures than any other European country ever had. Actually, the Portugal that wishes to believe that she only exists as Portugal in a restricted sense would deem it arbitrary that Portugal in a broad sense be included in the analysis. Hence, arbitrariness turns out to be convincing. The fact that Gil's analysis is so negative regarding the Portuguese did not interfere with the appeal it had for them. The important and most reassuring thing about this reading is that it compares the Portuguese of today with the Europeans of today, and subjects them all, in equal terms, to the European norm of inscription. Subliminally, what José Gil says to the Portuguese contradicts what he says about the Portuguese.

It is not easy, therefore, to fully account for interactions that are so prolonged in time and so dispersed in space, between the European zone and the colonial zone, and involving such complex problems that affected all the people that took part in them. All the more difficult the task, indeed, because no hegemonic country in the world system was ever involved in these interactions and marks—Portugal was a semiperipheral country throughout this period—and so the processes and sociabilities in which they translated themselves occurred always regardless of the hegemonic norms of interacting and marking. Since modern history was written on the basis of these norms, no wonder the narratives dealing with the interactions and marks in what we designate today as the space of official Portuguese language (*espaço de língua oficial portuguesa*) are not adequately identified and evaluated.

A telling example of this inadequacy is the mainstream analysis of the final moment of the colonial zone in this space: decolonization. According to dominant discourse in Europe and Portugal, and actually also present in the new African countries, decolonization was a failure because Portugal did not prepare her exit from the colonies, having rather abandoned them rashly, and leaving them in the worst possible conditions for them to be able to enjoy fully what they had just conquered: independence. There is some truth in this discourse, but it does conceal the fact that, in the conditions of the European neocolonial moment, good decolonization would have to be neocolonization, that is say, a kind of decolonization that would insure the continuity of the subordination of the new independent countries. Once the continuity was interrupted, new possibilities of alternative development for these countries were created, precisely developments other than neocolonialism. It is no accident that every African country liberated from Portuguese colonialism adopted anticapitalist and socialist models of development. That is to say, the

absence of a neocolonial burden created a new freedom to choose the future. The fact that these experiences failed is not relevant for my argument. What is relevant is that they took place. As a matter of fact, during this period, the second half of the 1970s, we witness one more manifestation of the complex relations and unsuspected complicities and identity exchanges between colonizer and colonized, between Prospero and Caliban, in this colonial zone. Portugal went through a period of socialist development, at the same time as her former colonies, even if for a shorter period. Its failure, as in the new African countries, was largely due to internal mistakes, but the global capitalist pressures in action to suffocate the Portuguese socialist moment were the same that suffocated the socialist experiments in Africa. The first IMF agreement with Portugal dates from 1978 and the one with Mozambique from 1984.

The furtive, transgressive (because nonhegemonic) nature of these experiences makes it difficult to identify them and even more so to interpret them adequately. How can it be argued, for example, that Portuguese colonialism was simultaneously less than colonialism and more than colonialism? That there were several colonialisms and several noncolonialisms inside the colonial zone? Is it possible to identify noncolonial sociabilities inside the colonial zone? Degrees of coloniality? What analytical, political, and cultural consequences are to be drawn from possible affirmative answers? Can mere opportunism explain the fact that so many African-born people felt and declared themselves to be Portuguese at the time of independence and decided to establish their residence in Portugal? Once in Portugal, was their surprise at not being accepted as such not genuine?

These difficulties affect today the analysis of the different societies that were involved in this time-space, as well as the analysis of the relations among them. For instance, how does one define postcolonialism in this time-space and how can it be given a progressive content? Can it be argued, for example, that the specificities of Portuguese colonialism somehow hinder the emergence of the postcolonial moment? Current fierce discussions in Brazil about quotas and affirmative action policies seem to indicate that it took almost two centuries for Brazil to go from the independence moment to the postcolonial moment. The fact that the racism typical of Portuguese colonialism is very different from that of British colonialism—unlike the latter, it did not translate itself, in general, into segregation laws, and when it did, the laws were frequently violated or ignored—made it more difficult to acknowledge the reality of racism and to turn it into a political question.[67]

But, on the other hand, this time-space of official Portuguese language seems to open unsuspected possibilities for postcolonial practices. To let them bear fruit, we have to find a different way of writing the history of this time-space. Between the two extremes that have prevailed—to follow Eurocentric hegemonic history blindly or to deny it completely—a third way is possible: to liberate history, to conceive of tradition in a non-traditional manner, in other words, to transform history in a field of realistic utopias. Three examples to illustrate the possibilities that emerge. Mozambique, a founding member of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), decided a little later to join the Anglophone Commonwealth, and has just joined the Francophone community. Furthermore, Mozambique became a member of the world organization of Islamic countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Organização da Conferência Islâmica). Such a manifestation of freedom of affiliation is difficult to imagine in any other postcolonial space but the lusophone one. The second example, linked to this one, is the reiterated inefficiency of the CPLP. In light of the dominant neocolonial European norm, such inoperativeness is deemed a collective failure, Portugal being the major culprit. Is this correct? The truth is that such communities were created to institutionalize neocolonialism and, in the present context, they are meaningless without it. In the space of official Portuguese language, such an institution should have a different profile and a different kind of mission, for example, to bring the new African countries to assist Portugal in decolonizing herself, and perhaps also to assist Brazil, a country that often assumes, in the lusophone space, the historical mission of taking the place of the absent or weak colonizer. As I said, only recently has Brazil started to face her internal colonialism and her total ignorance concerning her African roots.

If postcolonialism is a political and analytical perspective that conceives of the victims of colonialism not as passive victims but as fields of resistance, as historical agents in their own right, capable of non-derivative epistemologies, cultures and identities, new politics and cultures—then the lusophone time-space offers unique opportunities.

A third, even more disconcerting example of furtive, unexpected postcolonial practices is the work on identity currently taking place in Goa. Goa, the territory that suffered the longest period of effective colonization of the modern era, was the only colony that earned independence through integration in a vaster geopolitical space, the Indian state. Today, more than four decades later, there is in Goa an important cultural and artistic movement that aims

to retrieve Portuguese and European influences in order to ground, on that basis, its autonomous identity in India as a whole. It is a postcolonial affirmation that occurs outside the lusophone space but cannot be understood without it. And is it a postcolonial affirmation before the old colonizer? Or before India, through which she liberated herself from the colonial yoke? It is not possible to answer these questions with the analytical tools that mainstream, Anglo-Saxon postcolonialism provides.

The problem of the diagnosis and the problem of the past that haunt Portugal, and probably the countries that were subjected to Portuguese colonialism, derive from the fact that the experiences of intersection of the European zone with the colonial zone, as well as the palimpsests of times and spaces that consolidated them, occurred here outside the hegemonic norms of the second, capitalist, colonial, European Modernity. As I have been proposing in other contexts (Santos, "A Critique of the Lazy Reason" and *A gramática do tempo*), only a sociology of absences would allow to make present these experiences—for what they are, and not just, as has happened so far, for what they are not, for their enabling capacity and not for their paralyzing or diminishing effect. This sociology of absences may be possible now that the second Modernity is falling apart and new pasts seem to open up to new futures.

Notes

[1] A first version of this paper was presented at the American Portuguese Studies Association's Bi-annual Conference held in Minneapolis, MN on 5-7 October 2006. Part of the research for this paper was conducted in collaboration with Maria Paula Meneses. I benefited from the precious research assistance of Margarida Gomes. Maria Irene Ramalho made many insightful comments and helped prepare the English version.

[2] The possible exception here is Germany, a core country whose recent past is today still problematic to the Germans themselves and their neighbors.

[3] To inquire about the postcolonial meaning implies asking to what extent, in the countries freed from colonialism, did colonialism remain in place as a form of social domination, not only in regard to relations with the old colonizing power, but also and mainly with regards to internal relations among different groups and social classes, and between citizens and the State.

[4] I mean here the Western European expansion. In its broader sense, including its central and eastern regions, Europe had its own internal colonial zone.

[5] These categories concern the dominant social representations, hence they do not account for the fact that Portugal in a broad sense included vast populations that were not Portuguese, did not want to be Portuguese or were rejected and relegated to subaltern positions, if they ever wished to take advantage of the benefits of Portuguese citizenship.

[6] In the colonial context, strong presence may mean settlers' colonialism, effective military occupation, or intense reproduction of "little Europes" in Edward Said's sense.

[7] With the independence of the former Portuguese colonies, Portuguese citizenship became

quite difficult to obtain by those born in the colonies (whose parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents had not been born in Portugal) and who had not been living for more than five years in Portugal prior to 1974. Only in a few exceptional situations (e.g., veterans of the Portuguese colonial army or former civil servants in the colonial administration) could Africans apply successfully for Portuguese citizenship. This explains, in part, the explosion of "African migrants" in Portugal after 1974.

[8] Estado Novo is the name by which the regime, institutionalized by the 1933 Constitution, identified itself. Even though it had similarities with the Italian fascism of Benito Mussolini (lack of fundamental freedoms, single-party, authoritarianism, repression of opposition, hypernationalism, and colonialism), the Estado Novo never considered itself a fascist state.

[9] Portugal remained under political dictatorship from 1926 until 1974.

[10] Founder and main ideologue of the Estado Novo, the longest dictatorship in twentieth-century western Europe. Salazar was born in Santa Comba Dão, of a poor peasant family abiding by strict Catholic tenets. He attended the seminary but soon abandoned the clerical career to enroll in the University of Coimbra's Law School where he taught from 1917 until 1926. For a mere 13 days, he was Minister of Finance in the Cabinet resulting from the military coup of 28 May 1926, which toppled the First Republic. Back in Coimbra, Salazar resumed his teaching position, only to be summoned once again by the government to help solve the serious financial crisis affecting the country. Thus, Salazar emerged as a kind of providential savior. He accepted the job but with certain conditions. Soon he was not just controlling financial policy but all of the government's policies. In 1932, Salazar became Prime Minister. He fiercely suppressed all forms of opposition or liberalization and never yielded to the pressure either of the movements for the liberation of the colonies or of the United Nations' insistence that Portugal join other European countries that were putting an end to their empire. When illness disabled him in 1968, Salazar was replaced by Marcelo Caetano. Salazar died in 1970, convinced that he was still in power. The awe he inspired prevented his ministers from telling him the news of his resignation.

[11] António Cerejeira (1888-1976) best represents the Catholic Church in the Estado Novo: conservative, retrograde, obscurantist. Cerejeira attended the University of Coimbra, where he was also to teach for a while. A priest, he strongly opposed the First Republic for its lay nature. In order to fight the Republic, he reactivated the *Centro Académico de Democracia Cristã*, where Salazar became his closest collaborator. After Salazar established the Estado Novo, Cerejeira, as Patriarch Cardinal of Lisbon, became responsible for the alliance between the Catholic Church and Salazar's dictatorship, which found in the Church its main instrument of ideological legitimation.

[12] The International Police for State Defense (formerly PVDE) was created in 1945 to protect the regime against all opposition. The PIDE had ample means at its disposal to reach its ends, including a vast network of informants all over the country and interception of mail and phone calls. Thousands of opponents were sent to prison, often without trial. Caxias, Peniche, and Tarrafal are some of these prisons where political dissenters were subjected to all kinds of abuse and torture. The PIDE instilled a climate of fear and mistrust, which, to a certain extent, still pervades Portuguese society today.

[13] In 1955, when Portugal joined the UN, the organization recommended that the Portuguese government promote the independence of its colonies. The recommendation was not accepted. To circumvent the situation, the regime declared the colonies "overseas provinces" and gave citizenship to its inhabitants. This measure was internationally reproved by the UN General Assembly.

[14] Rigid control by the government of all information and means of communication. In place since 1926, preventive censorship was regulated in 1933 under the aegis of the Ministry for

Internal Affairs. In 1940, the Censorship Services fell under the control of the Prime Minister and were later integrated into a vaster structure, the SNI (Secretariado Nacional de Informação, Cultura Popular e Turismo [National Secretariat of Information, Popular Culture and Tourism]), which controlled the press, books, theater, radio, cinema and later television (introduced in Portugal in 1957). Its levels of control were wide and varied, including political, social, and moral issues. It blocked socialist or communist ideas or any movement against the government, and kept the population in total ignorance of what was really going on in the country and in the world, thus preventing the formation of a minimally enlightened public opinion.

[15] Political organization supporting the Estado Novo, on which it depended politically and financially. It was the only legal political party in Portugal, since the Estado Novo pronounced all other parties illegal. When he replaced Salazar, Marcelo Caetano substituted Acção Nacional Popular for União Nacional.

[16] The colonial war (1961-74) was the outcome of a series of factors. Among them: immobilism of the Estado Novo vis-à-vis the colonial question (whether after World War II, or after the Bandung Conference in 1955, or particularly after the beginning of the African independences in the late 1950s); incapacity for dialogue in the face of the appeals for negotiation on the part of the liberation movements in the various colonies; international support of various provinces given to the liberation movements and the creation in the newly independent countries bordering the Portuguese colonies of rearguards to unleash a prolonged guerrilla fight. The colonial war began in Angola in 1961, spread to Guinea in 1963, and to Mozambique in 1964. The war, understood by Salazar as a "patriotic design," was the beginning of the end of the regime. The State finances were deeply affected, undermining the Armed Forces, while Portugal became increasingly more isolated on the international political scene. On the human level, there were tragic consequences for both sides. On the Portuguese side alone: 9,000 dead, approximately 30,000 wounded, and 140,000 former combatants suffering from various types of post-combat trauma. The conflict reached resolution by political means only after 1974.

[17] *Saudade*, characterized by a persistent melancholic and pessimist essence that is an essential trait of the Portuguese collective psyche, is considered by some Portuguese intellectuals a national myth. In spite of its many metamorphoses in the course of centuries, *saudade* continues to be the leitmotiv of a large part of the national artistic, philosophical, and literary production. Some consider it an apt description of the Portuguese people: meditative, more prone to meditation than to action, more the victim than maker of destiny.

[18] Fate, Football [Soccer] and [Our Lady of] Fatima is the alliterative acronym defining the society's imaginary under the dictatorship. The national song, the sport-of-sports, and the place of the miracle constitute the perfect trilogy for a fatalist, oblivious, atavic, and credulous people. It functions simultaneously as powerful factor of alienation from the actual national problems, and as an excuse for the impossibility of solving them.

[19] Expression used by Salazar in one of his first addresses to the nation. The administration adopted it later as the closing phrase in all correspondence and bureaucratic documents.

[20] The successor of Salazar, Marcelo Caetano (1906-1980) was responsible for the late dictatorship, which failed its own attempts to reform. A politician of ultraconservative, integralist background, Marcelo Caetano was a law professor at the University of Lisbon. From 1940 onwards, he occupied some of the highest positions in Salazar's administration: National Commissar of the Portuguese Youth, Minister of the Colonies, and President of the Corporative Chamber. Marcelo Caetano was Portugal's Prime Minister in 1974, when the Revolution took place. He was in exile in Brazil when he died.

[21] The National Feminine Movement (MNF) was an organization founded in 1961 (symbolically on 28 April, Salazar's birthday). It presented itself officially as "an association independent from the State, not political, just patriotic." Its objective was to "congregate all Portuguese women interested in providing moral and material support to those fighting for the integrity of

our country's territory"—as put by its founder, Cecília Supico Pinto (wife of the then president of the Corporative Chamber). The National Feminine Movement was rather one more front of propaganda, mobilization and support for the colonial war. It promoted national fund-raising and campaigns, such as the "*saudade* operation," and created the famous, postage-free aerograms, which for many families were a fast and inexpensive means of communication with the deployed soldiers. It actually interfered with the military sphere by demanding more air transportation to evacuate the wounded. Its popularity among women (more than 80,000 in 22 sections) was not due to a clear political and ideological allegiance, but rather to an instinctive sense of solidarity and humanism, which the regime knew how to exploit. The opposition, however, was quick to denounce the classist nature and the controversial altruistic sense of the ladies of the high bourgeoisie, who, after having managed to keep their sons out of the war, engaged in patronizing those who were compelled to fight in it. Besides the MNF, who had the same unspoken links to the State, there were the "War Godmothers" (see note 34) and the Portuguese Red Cross.

[22] Salazar's complete sentence is: "Country of mild manners and moderate habits." It is part of an image of Portugal painstakingly constructed by the dictator and reproduced by the ideological system: a rural country, sheltered from civilizational madness, humble but happy in its current *aurea mediocritas*, which was compensated for by past glories.

[23] While the international community was promoting decolonization in Africa, Salazar insisted on his colonialist policy, isolating and dragging Portugal into cultural and economic backwardness, by waging a colonial war under the motto "Orgulhosamente sós."

[24] In 1938, the National Secretariat for Information, Popular Culture and Tourism (SNI) launched a contest to choose the most traditional Portuguese village, according to the regime's immobilist and conservative vision. António Ferro, a higher officer of SNI wrote at the time: "These people live happily, praying and dancing and singing, giving lessons of optimism to the cities [...]. Their needs are many, but with eyes full of stars and the heart full of songs, they consider themselves happy, because they feel closer to heaven than ever." The first prize went to the village of Monsanto (Beira Baixa), where the weathercock on the Lucano Tower still marks the event.

[25] Symbolic trilogy and pillar of the ideological construction enforced by Salazarism. It was the slogan and program of an intensely conservative, ruralist, nationalist, and Catholic politics. The original maxim as expressed by Salazar in 1914 included Order and Love but the trilogy became the classic formula. Authority, hierarchy, morality, social peace, and austerity completed the pattern of values of public and private life, which Salazar claimed were not imposed but rather proper of the Portuguese character.

[26] A paramilitary organization of the Portuguese youth. Inspired by Hitler's youth movements and Italian fascism, it was created by decree in 1936 (the women's section was created two years later). Enrollment was mandatory for all "youth, whether attending school or not." Its aim was to "encourage the overall development of the youth's physical capacity, contribute to character formation and devotion to the Homeland, under the sense of order, appreciation of discipline and respect for military duty."

[27] An anthem created in 1961 at the onset of the colonial war in Angola. Originally destined for the Armed Forces, sent by Salazar "to Angola immediately in a show of strength," the anthem was sung not only in military contexts, but also at various official ceremonies and institutions, such as schools, both in Portugal and in the colonies. It was also widely broadcast by all radio stations: "Angola is ours, is my cry / it is the flesh and blood of our people / to liberate, to defend, to fight until we die [...]."

[28] The idealized image of woman under Salazarism. The regime made every effort to keep women in their traditional roles as mothers and housewives, basically submissive vis-à-vis their husbands. The law itself sanctioned the inequality on the basis of "nature and the welfare of

the family." The propaganda, in its turn, disguised the real inferiority by exalting the feminine virtues as guarantor of the purity of family morality, the basis and model for all of society.

[29] Designation given to Marcelo Caetano's regular television interventions, ostensibly to "inform the Nation" and comment on the country's political situation. Clearly inspired by Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats.

[30] One of the most famous songs worldwide, sung by some of the most popular singers in many different versions. When it was created in 1947, it referred only to Coimbra, the city of students, love and its magic, but it soon became an icon of Portugal as the country of everlasting spring. It was cleverly used by the propaganda, both for tourism and to convey an image of peace and social tranquility.

[31] Title and first line of a poem by Pedro Homem de Melo, poet of folk themes, allegedly close to the regime. Focusing on the subject matter, so dear to the regime, of the Portuguese rural people, poor but with a rich soul, the poem was popularized by the fado singer, Amália Rodrigues, and became one of her most emblematic fados and one of her most successful, nationally and internationally.

[32] Traditional forms of homework used in schools for language learning during the Estado Novo. Nowadays, some teachers speak of dictation and copying as signifying dictatorship and to composition as signifying democracy.

[33] Age-old appellation, widely used during the Estado Novo, to designate the thousands of young women who served as domestic help in family households in exchange for a meager wage and/or accommodation. They were the victims of all kinds of arbitrariness and abuse in a society of "public virtues and private vices." After 25 April, a union was created, the government established a minimum wage, and met the union's demand for retirement and welfare rights. The new designation became then "domestic help."

[34] *Madrinhas de Guerra* ("War Godmothers") is a concept that dates from World War I. It gained prominence during the Portuguese Colonial War (1961-1974) as part of the National Feminine Movement. Its objective was to give social, economic, and particularly moral support to the soldiers in Africa. The aim was to make women participate in the war effort. Among the requirements to join this silent army were: "proper morals, a patriotic spirit, courage, capacity for sacrifice, faith in the victory and the ability to convey it."

[35] The reference is to the Revolution of 25 April 1974, also known as the Carnation Revolution, which put an end to 48 years of dictatorship. The revolution was conceived, planned, and carried out by a group of officers unhappy with the regime and the military situation resulting from the colonial war. These military, mostly captains, constituted what they called the Movement of the Armed Forces (Movimento das Forças Armadas [MFA]). Very early on the morning of 25 April, they took the main strategic points of the capital. In the afternoon, Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano surrendered in the Quartel do Carmo, under siege by the tanks of Captain Salgueiro Maia. The population cheered the MFA enthusiastically and endorsed its famous political program: "Decolonize, Democratize, Develop." What started out by being a military coup quickly turned into a popular revolution, considered to be one of the most peaceful in history.

[36] Zeca Afonso (1929-1987) was one of the most important singers and composers of so-called Portuguese intervention (protest) music. His songs in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the formation of a public consciousness critical of Salazarism and encouraged the struggle against the dictatorship. Zeca Afonso was a multifaceted composer. His repertoire includes Coimbra ballads and traditional music, as well as music composed for the theater. His work combines a mobilizing, transforming appeal with high artistic quality. Truly a bard or troubadour of his time, he is a symbol of resistance and utopia. His song "Grândola Vila Morena" was one of the passwords used by the MFA and later became an anthem of the Revolution.

[37] The phrase refers to the specific educational movement that deeply changed the school

system after 25 April 1974. Distancing itself from traditionalist, dirigiste, and authoritarian conceptions, the new school endorses the following principles: the right of all to education, the democratic governance of schools, a new relationship between teacher and pupil and radical change in syllabi.

[38] Mário Soares (1924-) is one of the most distinguished Portuguese politicians of the twentieth century, unquestionably the best known worldwide and the only one still alive of the three politicians that deeply marked Portuguese political life following 25 April 1974 (the other two were Álvaro Cunhal and Francisco de Sá Carneiro). Mário Soares holds degrees in History and Philosophy (1951) and Law (1957) from the University of Lisbon. An opponent of the regime from a very young age, Mário Soares took part in the political campaigns of Norton de Matos and Humberto Delgado, and ran for parliament on the opposition ticket in 1961 and 1969. He was arrested by the PIDE several times and was deported to S. Tomé. As a lawyer, he defended many political opponents of the regime. In 1971, he went into exile in Paris. In 1973, he co-founded the Socialist Party and became its uncontested leader after his return to Portugal immediately after the Revolution. He was a member of the first four provisional governments (1974-1978) and was Prime Minister in 1976-1978 and again in 1983-1985. In 1977 and 1985 he negotiated Portugal's entry in the EU. He was President of the Republic for two terms (1986-1996), and was a member of the European Parliament from 1999 to 2004. He is a permanent member of the Portuguese Council of State, and the President of the Mário Soares Foundation.

[39] The title of a song by Rui Veloso which had great success in the early 1980s. It marked a significant change in Portuguese urban music and became one of the first hits of so-called Portuguese Rock.

[40] Maria de Lurdes Pintasilgo (1930-2004), a salient public figure after the Revolution, she was a progressive Catholic and a feminist. She was the first (and only) woman to become Prime Minister of Portugal (1979-1980) and the second of any European country. She graduated in Chemical Engineering in 1953, was President of Pax Romana (International Movement of Catholic Students, 1956-1958), and a national and international leader of Graal (a catholic lay organization). She served as Minister of Social Affairs during the second and third provisional governments, ambassador to UNESCO (1976-1979), a candidate to the presidency of the Republic (1986), and deputy to the European Parliament (1987-1989). She was a member of various international organizations devoted to the Third World, social and cultural development, civic participation, and political intervention. She also became known for defending womens' active role in promoting a culture of solidarity and peace.

[41] The democratic counterpart of the Portuguese World Exposition, which took place in 1940 to celebrate the double anniversary of the foundation of the country (1140) and of the "Restauração" (1640, the independence after a period under Spanish rule [1580-1640]) and was the most important political and cultural event of the Estado Novo. In 1998, the government organized the Lisbon World Exposition, a major event aimed at enhancing the democratic regime and promoting national self-esteem. The objective of the Expo, whose theme was "encounters of cultures," was meant to symbolically put an end to the historical cycle of expansion and colonialism and initiate a new era of ecumenical openness to the world. However, the ambitious and very polemical cultural, artistic, and technological program became rather an exorcism than a real encounter with the other, in addition to an encounter of the Portuguese with themselves.

[42] One the most respected and productive contemporary Portuguese architects, Siza Vieira gained international renown and acclaim through works such as the restoration of the Campo di Marte in Venice (1985) and the coordination of the Schildersveijk Zone Five Renovation Plan in the Hague (1984-1988). After the Revolution, Siza participated, along with several other well-known Portuguese architects, in the SAAL project, an important project of social architecture. In his works, Siza Vieira utilizes traditional materials in communication with the organic space itself, and resorts to light materials like glass.

[43] Accommodations for tourists in renovated old family houses having architectural and artistic interest, and typical of a certain era. This alternative to mass tourism emerged in the 1980s and is being encouraged as a significant source of income. It offers guests an opportunity to revisit the cultural and gastronomical practices of rural communities as well as partake in their traditions.

[44] The State's Attorney General.

[45] In this section I draw heavily on Santos and Meneses (2006).

[46] The famous epic poem by the Portuguese poet Luís de Camões (1572) glorifying the Portuguese leading role in the European expansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

[47] A dialogue published in 1590 in which Diogo de Couto (1542-1616) shows the mediocre and often corrupt practices of Portuguese colonial authorities.

[48] On this subject, see also Pereira, Coxito, Martins and Doyle.

[49] About specifically selling Mozambique, see Almeida.

[50] Portugal was not even invited to attend an earlier conference, promoted by Belgium and Germany.

[51] In a previous paper ("Between Prospero and Caliban"), I used Shakespeare's characters in *The Tempest*—Prospero and Caliban—as metaphors of the colonial encounter between the "civilized" colonizer and the "barbarian" colonized.

[52] Terreiro do Paço stands as a metaphor of the colonial political and administrative center in Lisbon.

[53] This homage did not include some of the most precious military elements during this war, the indigenous soldiers from Angola, usually referred to as "angolas."

[54] The campaigns were carried out throughout the country. For example, in Zambezia, in 1869, 1871-1875 and 1888; against the Namarrais, in Nampula, in 1896-1897; in Barué, in 1902 and again in 1917-1918; against Sangage, in 1912; and against the Makonde people, in 1919.

[55] The capital of Mozambique was then on the Island of Mozambique. At the very end of the nineteenth century it was transferred to Lourenço Marques.

[56] The Lourenço Marques district was then a small appendix of the colonial territory, separated from the closest Portuguese possession—Inhambane—by the Gaza state (then claimed by Portugal as a vassal).

[57] "Tu já não és um régulo dos mangonis, és um matonga, como qualquer outro."

[58] Ngungunyane, together with some close members of the ruling elite, was sent into exile to the Azores where he died in 1906.

[59] Well-expressed by Salazar's famous slogan "Orgulhosamente sós" ("proudly alone"). See note 23.

[60] There are many complicities between the two sectors, and so the strategies of the latter serve well those of the former, even though the former distances itself formally from them.

[61] FRETILIN—Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente ("Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor")—was a resistance movement that fought for the independence of East Timor, first from Portugal (until 1974) and then from Indonesia (between 1975 and 1998). After East Timor gained its independence from Indonesia, FRETILIN became one of several parties competing for power in a multi-party system.

[62] These were funds designed to help less-developed countries (such as Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland), as they joined the European Union, to speed up their convergence toward the "European average."

[63] Europe is now trying to reinvent family agriculture after it was destroyed in Portugal in a decade of "common agriculture policy."

[64] This explains why, in this regard, the loyalty to the European project was superior to that of two founding members, France and Germany.

[65] In this case, as with several other publications, Gil uses several quite questionable comparisons. For example, see what Hannah Arendt wrote about post-nazi Germany: "There has been much discussion of the widespread tendency in Germany to act as though the years from 1933 to 1945 never existed; as though this part of German and European and thus world history could be expunged from the textbooks; as though everything depended on forgetting the 'negative' aspect of the past and reducing horror to sentimentality. (The world-wide success of *The Diary of Anne Frank* shows clear proof that such tendencies were not confined to Germany). It was a grotesque state of affairs when German young people were not allowed to learn the facts that every school child a few miles away could not help knowing. Behind all this there was, of course, genuine perplexity. And this very incapacity to face the reality of the past might possibly have been a direct heritage of the inner emigration, as it was undoubtedly to a considerable extent, and even more directly, a consequence of the Hitler regime" (19). Is this different from what Gil claims to be the Portuguese case?

[66] The same is true of Kiswahili, or Swahili, a language spoken in Eastern Africa. Promoted as a symbol of African identity, Kiswahili has a very strong component of Portuguese wording at its roots. For example, the piece of cloth that women wear daily—*leso*—is of Portuguese origin (from "lenço").

[67] The "Estatuto do Indigenato," a segregation law applying to the native Africans of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, was abolished, at least formally, in 1961.

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O problema do consenso histórico na área lusófona[1]

Pedro Graça

Resumo: A organização política, económica e cultural da chamada Lusofonia, através do projecto da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP), constituído há uma década, mantém-se num nível de virtualidade que tarda em materializar-se. A CPLP não atingiu um patamar de visibilidade minimamente relevante no seio da comunidade internacional, nem conseguiu interagir com os cidadãos lusófonos, existindo vários factores que condicionam a situação. O primeiro é a falta de um consenso histórico quanto ao passado comum dos países lusófonos, o qual decorre da história colonial de Portugal. A matriz humanista e universalista é contudo uma potencialidade da projecção do futuro comum lusófono.

Enquadramento

"Repensar a História de África, nomeadamente nas suas interacções com a História de Portugal," como desafia o presente colóquio, conduz-nos ao problema do tratamento das imagens recíprocas na área lusófona. Na perspectiva das relações culturais internacionais, a História—enquanto conhecimento histórico que informa a memória dos povos—desempenha um papel fundamental como factor de coesão ou dissociação quando se estabelecem projectos de relacionamento institucionalizado. "Os povos existem na vida internacional exactamente e apenas na maneira como são vistos"—observou Adriano

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 445-61.
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Moreira ("Aspectos Negativos" 9)—e isto significa, em última análise, que não é a realidade histórica que perdura, o que perdura é a imagem que ficou dessa mesma realidade, transformada em História.

A História enquanto vivência real do passado é um facto que sofre desvios de análise no processo de conhecimento científico. Mas a Ciência Histórica existe, mesmo imperfeita, e o seu propósito é precisamente compreender na medida do possível a realidade após um tratamento rigoroso dos acontecimentos e fenómenos investigados. A metodologia da abordagem é portanto fundamental. A tarefa já é difícil quando se estuda documentos fiáveis que reproduzem factos históricos; ainda mais o é quando se procura compreender a realidade por intermédio do processo da formação das imagens culturais nacionais.

O estudo da imagem cultural nacional pode ser efectuado através de uma metodologia interdisciplinar que articula conceitos da História com a Ciência Política, Antropologia, Sociologia e Psicologia Social. Numa perspectiva global, os países funcionam como sistemas de informação cultural nacional pois as relações culturais internacionais desenvolvem-se por meio de vários instrumentos de comunicação social. Neste sistema existem estruturas sociais que condicionam a produção da informação cultural nacional e a projecção da imagem cultural nacional. Mas a definição e os contornos de uma imagem cultural nacional não dependem somente de quem a emite; dependem também de quem a recebe e sobretudo do resultado final da complexidade de relações que o processo histórico estigmatizou, correspondendo favoravelmente esse resultado à hierarquia das potências enquanto poderes culturais nacionais. É que de facto as relações internacionais são, antes de mais, relações culturais internacionais, e estas são relações entre poderes culturais nacionais.

Os historiadores estão por isso muitas vezes envolvidos na investigação, articulando factos, analisando fenómenos e transmitindo imagens culturais nacionais sem questionar o conceito de imagem, pois em princípio isso não faz parte do seu momentâneo objecto de estudo. Ao investigar a História de um país ou da relação entre países, o historiador tem tendência para partir de pressupostos explícitos e implícitos que de algum modo esboçam imagens neutras ou positivas ou negativas, aproximando-se as primeiras metodologicamente de um tipo ideal difícil de definir. A parcialidade do historiador pode então reproduzir-se em análises desviadas da realidade histórica, a que se juntam as provenientes de outros cientistas sociais, que acabam muitas vezes por participar na elaboração da História, a qual é partilhada depois pelo *senso comum* que, inovando até,

repete estereótipos na rede dos processos de *enculturação* e socialização.

Entre os desvios de análise mais frequentes encontram-se os que, originando visões parciais da realidade, são formados na base de *apriorismos políticos* e *percepções etnocêntricas*. O apriorismo político pode ser observado, por exemplo, em trabalhos de investigadores posicionados na área de influência do Poder, que por razões de natureza pessoal e profissional muitas vezes confundem o *objecto de estudo* com o *objectivo do estudo*. A percepção etnocêntrica é um fenómeno praticamente comum a todos os investigadores, uma vez que, segundo a Psicologia Social, a visão da realidade é condicionada pelo grupo, neste caso nacional, em que os indivíduos são *enculturados* (Klineberg 562-74). Por uma questão de rigor, o investigador consciente destes desvios vê-se assim obrigado a reconhecer o relativismo possível do conhecimento científico e a adoptar uma atitude cautelosa na abordagem da realidade social, que passa por uma reflexão sobre a operacionalidade dos conceitos, nomeadamente no que respeita à sua definição, formulando respostas abertas à discussão.

O problema do consenso histórico na área lusófona enquadra-se nestas considerações preliminares; trata-se de compreender, no contexto da projectada Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, a realidade da imagem da Cultura Portuguesa do ponto de vista histórico, como factor de coesão ou de dissociação, no processo de institucionalização global das relações entre os sete Estados *(7 perspectivas)*, tendo por base, de facto, elementos da matriz cultural portuguesa. O consenso histórico na área lusófona surge assim também, noutro sentido, como uma situação ideal de relacionamento entre sete perspectivas *(7 memórias)* que reconhecem a imagem autêntica da Cultura Portuguesa, potencializando, deste modo, as relações políticas que visam a institucionalização da Comunidade.

Uma perspectiva de Portugal

Parece consistente a observação de que a aceitação da existência de uma efectiva tradição humanista e universal na Cultura Portuguesa será, para além da Língua, um factor de coesão entre *os sete* e fornecerá ao discurso político um princípio orientador da convivência entre povos e culturas no Século XXI. Mas a realidade parece ser a da refutação geral da existência de tal tradição, sobre a qual Gilberto Freyre construiu cientificamente o conceito de Lusotropicalismo. É fácil encontrar exemplos dessa refutação nas mais variadas formas de informação cultural, desde a Universidade à Televisão. Não faltam trabalhos académicos, filmes históricos e peças de jornalismo que reprodu-

zem exclusivamente o lado negro da acção colonial portuguesa. Em Portugal, depois de 25 de Abril de 1974, as Ciências Sociais e a opinião pública de uma maneira geral foram constantemente condicionadas pela doutrina marxista, a qual originou uma vaga de "*pronto-a-pensar*" orientando toda e qualquer análise da realidade social a partir dos mesmos pressupostos para chegar às mesmas conclusões (Bessa 1994). O conceito de Lusotropicalismo foi politizado no período colonial, tanto por Portugal como pelo movimento anticolonial e, depois de 1974, quase excluído do vocabulário científico e intelectual português como instrumento sério de análise e compreensão da especificidade da adaptação da Cultura Portuguesa ao ambiente das regiões tropicais. O nome de Gilberto Freyre passou a ser sinónimo de desonestidade científica e foi banido das bibliografias "respeitáveis." Injustiça e incompetência científica relativamente à obra e ao homem que Georges Gurvitch considerou como um dos maiores sociólogos dos tempos modernos.[2]

Nos últimos 20 anos, a *História de Portugal foi assim colocada no banco dos réus e intimidada a declarar-se culpada*, praticamente sem advogados de defesa, num grande número de canais de informação cultural. As sequelas de tal embate sobrevivem ainda mas, uma geração depois, parece chegada a hora de rever a nossa História em África sem complexos, sem arrogância, procurando apenas a nossa verdadeira imagem, ou pelo menos a sua forma mais aproximada. A parte negativa tem sido bastante explorada e extrapolada. A parte positiva continua encoberta. Descubramos esta utilizando como instrumento importante, entre outros, Gilberto Freyre e os seus conceitos. Na perspectiva de Portugal, não se trata de nenhuma pretensão ou forma actual de neocolonialismo cultural, mas sim de *reconhecer a originalidade e individualidade histórica da adaptação da Cultura Portuguesa a ambientes tropicais*, integrada depois num processo de interacção cultural múltipla e alargada, constituindo parte dos fundamentos de novos Estados com projectos nacionais. Trata-se afinal de *reconhecer explicitamente que nem tudo foi negativo* na colonização portuguesa. Houve factos positivos cujo estudo é importante, por exemplo, na procura de respostas actuais para os problemas de estruturação moderna das sociedades africanas tradicionais. Na verdade, o aproveitamento integral do saber colonial recente, despido hoje do seu elemento ideológico, continua em grande parte bloqueado pelas barreiras psicossociológicas de uma imagem histórica estereotipada das realizações da Cultura Portuguesa em África: uma atitude recorrentemente reduzida ao epíteto de "colonial-fascista," responsável por políticas implacáveis de exploração e destruição do Homem e da Cul-

tura Africana, confundindo-se erradamente Portugal do Estado Novo com a Alemanha do Nacional-Socialismo ou a Itália do Estado Fascista.

Mas a força da sobrevivência dessa imagem, agora que o discurso científico de raiz marxista se encontra enfraquecido, está sobretudo no facto de que esta é coerente com toda a sequência de imagens, entretanto formuladas, da atitude de Portugal relativamente aos povos e culturas do hemisfério sul com quem foi contactando e estabelecendo relações, de igualdade ou de dominação, desde o Século XV. No processo de formação da nossa imagem cultural, a escravatura ligou-se directamente ao trabalho forçado, à guerra colonial e às notícias unilaterais de massacres, embora os tivesse havido em ambos os lados enquanto excepção à regra, aliás, como infelizmente parece acontecer na maior parte das guerras.

Por isso, como é possível acreditar que uma Cultura que revela uma constante histórica de atitude desumana, evidente em vários canais de informação cultural, a nível nacional e internacional, nomeadamente na área lusófona, possa apresentar-se como detentora de uma tradição humanista e universal e com uma experiência africana de Desenvolvimento que possa ser aproveitada actualmente? Esta questão, formulada como argumento num contexto de discussão mediática, contraria qualquer resposta que esboce minimamente a apresentação de um elemento positivo da colonização.[3] Fundamentalmente, é difícil a Portugal estimular a formalização de um projecto político, económico e cultural lusófono, tendo por base, explícita ou implicitamente, a matriz da sua própria cultura envolvida numa imagem tendencialmente negativa quanto à memória do relacionamento com os outros.

Dinâmica de dissociação da área lusófona

Mas, na realidade, existe uma tendência no sentido da coesão dos países lusófonos em torno da defesa e divulgação da Língua Portuguesa. É do interesse de todos que o Português ganhe espaço e se consolide no sistema das relações internacionais, nomeadamente no seio das Organizações Internacionais. Por esta razão, frequentemente se declara nos sete países que há quase 200 milhões de falantes da Língua Portuguesa. É um argumento fundamentalmente político e não cabe aqui agora analisar em que medida esse número se afasta da realidade que projecta como imagem sobrevalorizada.[4] O que nos interessa é desde já atestar o facto de que mesmo assim, mesmo havendo um princípio de coesão em torno da Língua Portuguesa, não tem sido consensual a utilização do *conceito de Lusofonia* para definir a projecção da sua realidade demográfica

e geográfica, nem a do *conceito de Comunidade Lusófona* para definir o projecto de organização formal dessa realidade.

Ao conceito de Lusofonia parece que tem andado associado, no âmbito de uma parte substancial da elite intelectual, académica e política dos Países Africanos Lusófonos, um sentido pejorativo de neocolonialismo cultural por parte de Portugal. Com efeito, parece que semanticamente o vocábulo *Luso* tem sido uma causa importante desse princípio de dissociação, porque de algum modo, numa das interpretações possíveis, confere *à priori* a Portugal um *estatuto ascendente* numa situação de relacionamento que se pretende igual. O Brasil, por seu turno, tem mesmo utilizado frequentemente no discurso oficial o *conceito de Países de Língua Comum*, naquilo que pode ser entendido como um pressuposto de não reconhecimento de uma "vantagem competitiva" de Portugal no processo de liderança da organização formal da área lusófona (Beltrán 21-28). Pela palavra *Luso* se chega também facilmente ao conceito de Lusotropicalismo e consequentemente à sua interpretação ideológica, que se pode fazer conotar com um projecto global de integração cultural da área lusófona, tendo a matriz portuguesa como referência principal; eventualmente, uma ressurgência actualizada do velho projecto da Comunidade Luso-Brasileira.

Constituindo pois o problema semântico um real factor de dissociação no que diz respeito à utilização do conceito de Comunidade Lusófona, o *conceito de Língua Portuguesa* surge assim como objectivamente linguístico e politicamente neutro. Todavia, o projecto da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa tem sido anunciado como político, económico e cultural. Estamos pois também perante uma contradição no que respeita à *operacionalidade mobilizadora do conceito.* É esta contradição que representa um problema explícito de definição de *auto-imagem*, pela forma múltipla como os sete países se revêem no *nome do projecto.* Se considerarmos que a *imagem dos outros* é uma variável relativamente estável da Política Externa que ajuda a explicar a sua orientação a longo prazo, compreenderemos que a falta de um consenso histórico na área lusófona relativamente ao passado colonial provoca *ruídos* na comunicação desenvolvida no sentido da construção da Comunidade. É, portanto, contraproducente invocar a História conjunta dos sete, pelo menos de momento, como fundamento cultural da Comunidade, uma vez que a imagem da Cultura Portuguesa tem vindo a produzir um *efeito de halo* negativo no que respeita ao Passado das suas relações com o Brasil e os Países Africanos Lusófonos.[5]

O apelo constante, nomeadamente por parte do discurso político português, à comunidade de afectos e interesses, não produz de imediato um efeito de

coesão. Os dirigentes políticos podem eventualmente considerar como exemplo óbvio a sua própria experiência no domínio de determinadas relações inter-pessoais. Mas globalmente não parece ser possível afirmar que a fórmula *comunidade de afectos e interesses* funcione automaticamente como conceito mobilizador de pessoas, grupos e instituições no sentido da aceleração do processo. Os factos têm-nos revelado que pelo menos também no campo das lideranças existem certas incompatibilidades que têm provocado desencontros e adiamentos.

A dinâmica de dissociação reproduz-se deste modo nas relações políticas e nas imagens reciprocamente múltiplas que se fundamentam principalmente na parte marcante da História conjunta dos sete países. Esta parte é a História de Portugal na sua vertente colonial, quer no Brasil, quer em África.

A lição da história

A fórmula *comunidade de afectos e interesses* não é substancialmente original. Já estava presente, ora latentemente, ora de uma forma explicitamente diferente, no longo período do movimento de institucionalização da antiga Comunidade Luso-Brasileira. Nem mesmo então, quando havia apenas dois Estados e coesão em torno de valores derivados da matriz cultural portuguesa, se conseguiu institucionalizar de facto a Comunidade. Trinta anos depois do seu último momento de apogeu, será porventura útil recordar o trecho inicial da primeira conclusão do 2º Congresso das Comunidades de Cultura Portuguesa relativa às Relações Luso-Brasileiras:

> Considerar basilar uma acção coordenada a desenvolver no sentido de formar e movimentar a opinião pública, no conjunto português e no Brasil, de modo que urgente e generalizadamente se crie o clima de unidade e autenticidade sobre o qual deve apoiar-se a concretização prática da Comunidade Luso-Brasileira. (Moreira et al 17-18)[6]

Isto é, em 1967, quase meio século depois do início do movimento progressivo de institucionalização da Comunidade Luso-Brasileira, e catorze anos depois da assinatura do Tratado de Amizade e Consulta que marcou oficialmente o seu auge, ainda se considerava basilar "formar e movimentar a opinião pública" de modo a criar um "clima de unidade e autenticidade" para suportar a sua "concretização prática." Nesse mesmo ano, pouco tempo antes do Congresso, Adriano Moreira analisou a situação evidenciando dois problemas: *a herança comum* e *a imagem recíproca*. Em relação ao primeiro,

referindo-se ao Brasil, observava que essa herança lhe pertencia em exclusivo e na medida em que os brasileiros a sentissem como sua e tivessem interesse em preservá-la e defendê-la; em sua opinião, esse sentimento só tinha interesse para a Comunidade se englobasse "*uma partilha de concepções quanto ao futuro, ou quanto aos futuros possíveis.*" Em relação ao segundo problema, constatava a existência de divergências importantes entre as imagens correntes e a realidade e concluía pela "*necessidade urgentíssima de redefinir a imagem recíproca de ambos os países*" ("Aspectos Negativos" 8-18).

Hoje, olhando para a História, e numa visão facilitada pela análise *a posteriori*, podemos afirmar que a evolução da Comunidade teria sido diferente se os dois Governos, nomeadamente o de Portugal, tivessem adoptado como prioridade constante a resolução dos problemas da herança comum e da imagem recíproca. Teria sido necessária uma acção mais cultural que política—apoiando sem hesitações nem contrapartidas as iniciativas da sociedade civil—traduzida num forte investimento na investigação e no ensino da História conjunta nos dois países, pelo menos ao nível secundário e universitário, e também na realização frequente de produtos culturais de grande difusão sobre a realidade histórica e presente, estimulando as potencialidades dos agentes culturais não-oficiais. O comércio do Livro entre Portugal e o Brasil foi durante algum tempo o campo em que houve maior dinamismo de carácter cultural, mas os números mostram que após um certo desenvolvimento das transacções—que no entanto não alterou a situação anterior de grande desconhecimento recíproco, de acordo com as análises de Almerindo Lessa, Armando Gonçalves Pereira, Nuno Simões e Luís Forjaz Trigueiros—, entre 1957 e 1967, as exportações de livros de Portugal para o Brasil diminuíram 80% (AAVV 28; Lessa; Simões; Pereira; Trigueiros). Mesmo iniciativas privadas algo oficiosas como as da União das Comunidades de Cultura Portuguesa tiveram de enfrentar resistências por parte das autoridades oficiais, ciosas em controlar politicamente um processo de natureza mais cultural que política. Não houve portanto de facto no processo da Comunidade uma sensibilidade efectiva, poder-se-á mesmo dizer *engenho*, para a questão da opinião pública enquanto fundamento essencial do projecto, que não a dos documentos oficiais, das promessas e dos discursos políticos efémeros, confinados ao círculo das elites.

O projecto da Comunidade Luso-Brasileira não teve, assim, até 1974 repercussões globalmente significativas no ambiente social e na criação cultural da sociedade brasileira e da sociedade portuguesa, situação também agravada

pela conjuntura internacional e consequentes circunstâncias diplomáticas. Entre 1974 e 1984, é possível afirmar que não houve discurso oficial significativo no sentido do ressurgimento da velha Comunidade Luso-Brasileira ou da criação de uma nova Comunidade Luso-Afro-Brasileira. E raríssimas foram as excepções na sociedade civil a denotar preocupação com este assunto (Moreira *Novíssimo*; "Poder"; "Papel"; "Factores"; *Condicionamentos*). As atenções estavam sobretudo voltadas para a questão da integração na Comunidade Económica Europeia—sem cuidar da articulação com a área lusófona—e, de modo algo espontâneo, foi precisamente este facto que estimulou um debate entre 1984 e 1986 no seio das instituições e das elites governantes e não-governantes sobre a Política de Cooperação, relançando também desta forma, progressivamente, a preocupação em volta da organização das relações lusófonas (Graça 237). Em 1985 a criação da União das Cidades Capitais de Língua Portuguesa e em 1986 a questão do Acordo Ortográfico e a visita do Presidente Sarney a Portugal contribuíram para esse "relançamento," tendo em 1987 o primeiro Governo de maioria parlamentar desde Abril de 74 definido como prioritária a cooperação com os Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa "concedendo especial relevância ao vector cultural" (*Programa* 14, 13, 40-44, 62, 64, 68-69, 113-114).

No ano seguinte, o Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros propugnava "*uma entidade nova na cena internacional, ao lado da Commonwealth e da francofonia*" (Pinheiro 26). Em 1989, Mário Soares e José Sarney impulsionaram a criação do Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa, que se conservou inactivo até hoje. Finalmente, em 1990, durante a visita do Presidente Collor de Mello, no almoço em sua homenagem, Cavaco Silva terminava o seu discurso brindando "*à construção de uma renovada Comunidade Luso-Brasileira*" (*Boletim*). No entanto, tal brinde só poderá ser entendido como uma manifestação circunstancial de um desejo de "re-estreitamento" das relações luso-brasileiras, e não como uma manifestação pública de comprometimento político relativamente ao ressurgimento do velho projecto conjunto, acção tendencialmente inexequível por virtude de se ter alterado o ambiente político da área geohistórica e cultural em que o mesmo assentava. Contudo, é precisamente neste ponto que parece ter subsistido até hoje uma certa confusão, relativamente à sobreposição do novo projecto luso-afro-brasileiro, pela manifestação latente de uma dinâmica luso-brasileira que revela a continuidade de uma estrutura social informal do velho projecto luso-brasileiro. Esta dinâmica tem sido evidenciada com maior ou menor subtileza no discurso político portu-

guês e brasileiro relacionado com a institucionalização da CPLP. Na verdade, os factos têm-nos mostrado que as linhas de orientação do processo se assemelham às do velho projecto luso-brasileiro pela dinâmica fortemente política e até personalizada, funcionando Portugal e o Brasil como agentes activos e os PALOP como agentes passivos.

Ora, sobre o efeito negativo desta dinâmica, devemos relembrar o Passado e relembrar também, se necessário continuamente, que estamos perante um facto novo de relacionamento entre sete perspectivas, que, em termos históricos, só muito recentemente manifestaram interesse em dar início a um processo de convergência que ainda se mantém indefinido quanto ao futuro ou aos futuros possíveis. Com efeito, a iniciativa partiu do Brasil em 1993 ao apresentar o primeiro projecto da designada Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa. Portugal apoiou-o de imediato e, durante esse mesmo ano e em 1994, tentou-se estabelecer uma *sinergia lusófona* no âmbito das elites políticas e culturais, a qual não se chegou a constituir realmente.

O melhor indicador para se compreender a situação é porventura o seguinte. Em Fevereiro de 1994 houve uma reunião dos Ministros dos Negócios Estrangeiros dos sete países em Brasília, da qual resultou a decisão conjunta de institucionalizar a CPLP. No mês seguinte, numa missão destinada a concertar a data da sua criação oficial, marcada depois para 28 de Junho em Lisboa, José Aparecido de Oliveira visitou Maputo para se encontrar com o Presidente Chissano. Depois de ter esperado várias horas, o encontro foi adiado para o dia seguinte e, segundo as notícias publicadas, a atitude de Chissano foi algo vaga e desinteressada. De facto, em entrevista concedida após a reunião ao correspondente em Maputo do jornal português *Semanário*, Chissano afirmou:

> Moçambique está inserido numa região de países da Comunidade Britânica e por isso assistimos a muitas reuniões, o que fazemos com muito agrado porque temos um relacionamento económico com esses países, do qual não podemos fugir. Se houver elegibilidade, nós não temos problemas em aderir à Comunidade Britânica.

Esta afirmação, pelo seu *timing* e *conteúdo*, possui um significado político que não se reduz a uma mera espécie de chantagem política, conforme chegou a ser escrito na imprensa portuguesa. Trata-se antes de uma tomada de posição destinada a preservar a autonomia de Moçambique na escolha das suas relações internacionais, relativamente a pressões e condicionalismos progres-

sivamente impostos pela dinâmica luso-brasileira de institucionalização da CPLP. Por outro lado, esta posição é também lógica e coerente com a característica atitude de anticolonialismo cultural que os Países Africanos Lusófonos adoptaram em relação à Cultura Portuguesa após as Independências (Leite). E houve e tem havido de facto no processo da CPLP, nomeadamente por parte do discurso político brasileiro, afirmações interpretáveis como conducentes a um projecto que se aproxima mais do ressurgimento da velha Comunidade Luso-Brasileira do que do surgimento da nova Comunidade Luso-Afro-Brasileira. José Aparecido de Oliveira tornou esse discurso bem claro dois dias antes de terminar a sua missão em Portugal ao fazer as seguintes afirmações em entrevista à TV 2:

> Eu sou um português que nasceu no outro lado do Atlântico [...]. A não-institucionalização da CPLP retarda a Providência [...]. A Comunidade sobrevive há cinco séculos [...]. Nós somos os herdeiros da alma portuguesa [...].

No entanto, este espírito de filiação na Cultura Portuguesa não se encontra reflectido e reproduzido nos Países Africanos Lusófonos, pelo menos de uma forma dominante, com excepção talvez em certa medida de Cabo Verde.

Deste modo, a concretização do Projecto tal como vem sendo anunciado afigura-se difícil. Ocorridos os adiamentos, o IV Encontro dos Ministros dos Negócios Estrangeiros e das Relações Exteriores dos Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa e de Portugal, realizado em Lisboa em 5 e 6 de Abril do ano de 1995, elaborou um comunicado final de 35 pontos no qual se reservou somente um para o processo da CPLP, nos seguintes termos:

> Os Ministros reiteram o seu interesse e empenho na criação da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, com vista a valorizar, no plano internacional, a acção individual e colectiva dos Países de Língua Portuguesa e a incrementar uma política comum de cooperação para o desenvolvimento. (12)

Estamos perante uma declaração circunstancial que revela uma preocupação prioritária com a componente política em termos de relações internacionais e de cooperação para o desenvolvimento. O seu valor efectivo é o de uma normal e recorrente declaração diplomática de intenções, não produzindo efeitos no sentido da aceleração do processo.

De tudo isto decorre portanto a necessidade, no que pelo menos a Por-

tugal diz respeito, de repensar a estratégia, a oportunidade, a dinâmica e a exequibilidade financeira do Projecto, de modo a contribuir para que a CPLP não se fique pelas palavras. A História assim no-lo aponta e, se se fizer uma comparação com o processo da Francofonia, ficar-se-á porventura com a convicção de que a CPLP é um projecto de dimensão superior às capacidades e possibilidades do momento. Com efeito, o movimento de institucionalização da Francofonia foi iniciado em 1970 por Senghor, Bourguiba e Diori, presidentes do Senegal, Tunísia e Níger, com a criação neste último país da Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT), com o objectivo de assegurar a cooperação multilateral nos domínios da cultura, educação, formação, comunicação, direito e economia. Um ponto de partida no qual a componente política não foi prioritária. De facto, esta só foi instituída 21 anos depois, em 1991, com a criação do Conseil Permanent de la Francophonie (CPF) que finalmente tem por objectivo reforçar o peso da Francofonia na comunidade política internacional. Porém, 25 anos depois, a ACCT continua a ser o organismo mais importante da Francofonia, embora surja a interrogação sobre a continuidade do seu papel relativamente ao CPF, ao que o seu secretário-geral desde há 9 anos, Jean Louis Roy, canadiano natural do Quebéc, responde da seguinte forma:

> Je suis très surpris de voir la façon dont les gens compliquent les choses. Il y a un sommet des chefs d'État, une conférence ministérielle, une assemblée des représentants personnels des chefs d'État: ce sont les instances. L'Agence n'est pas une instance, c'est une organisation intergouvernementale. Elle est le secrétariat de toutes les instances, y compris des sommets. Les instances sont là pour arrêter les décisions, pour arrêter les budgets, pour assurer que les décisions des chefs d'États soient suivies. Nous avons comme mandat de réaliser sur le terrain cet ensemble de décisions, de préparer des propositions. (8)

Com efeito, a ACCT, iniciativa de três líderes africanos, tem sido o motor da Francofonia, à qual se foram entretanto agregando um conjunto de instituições, das quais se deve também destacar como mais importantes e activas o Bureau International du Forum Francophone des Affaires (BIFFA), criado em 1987, e a Association des Universités Partiellement ou Entièrement de Langue Française-Université des Réseaux d'Expression Française (AUPELF--UREF), a mais antiga das instituições francófonas, pois a sua génese remonta a 1961 quando foi criada no Canadá. Na verdade, a dinâmica desta última é

notória no campo da cultura, ciência e formação, congregando a quase totalidade das universidades e organismos de investigação francófonos. Para se ter uma ideia, a ACCT possui um orçamento de 58 milhões de FF e 10 institutos enquanto que a AUPELF-UREF possui um orçamento de 40 milhões de FF e 280 institutos. Ou seja, uma base e esteios de natureza cultural que asseguram a dinâmica da Francofonia.

O exemplo do processo de institucionalização da Francofonia é pois significativo no que diz respeito à forma como se foi desenvolvendo nos últimos 25 anos, merecendo da parte de Jean Louis Roy o comentário de que "*un quart de siècle c'est peu, dans 50 ans on aura davantage construit la francophonie*" (7). No caso da Lusofonia, talvez seja sensato considerar que não é com projectos grandiosos tendencialmente inexequíveis, embora formulados com boas intenções, que se consegue recuperar um tempo supostamente perdido. Pelo contrário, perde-se ainda mais tempo.

A lição da História, inclusive do Presente, abre-nos assim a perspectiva do problema do consenso histórico na área lusófona—em ambos os sentidos apontados no início deste estudo—apresentando-nos os eventuais elementos disfuncionais e efeitos desestruturantes. *Herança comum subvalorizada ou mesmo desvalorizada, imagens recíprocas divergentes, opinião pública desconectada, excessiva politização e personalização do processo, dinâmica tendencialmente luso-brasileira, passividade dos Países Africanos Lusófonos*, todos estes factores se conjugam e são porventura fundamentos reais das dificuldades de institucionalização da CPLP, a par dos que têm a ver exclusivamente com a exequibilidade financeira e material do projecto, tendo em conta o número e a natureza das instituições simultaneamente previstas: Parlamento dos Povos de Língua Portuguesa, Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa, Universidade dos Sete e Tribunal Arbitral.

Construindo o consenso

De acordo com o pressuposto de que a comunicação é o elemento que retarda, mantém ou acelera o processo de relacionamento e interacção social, o melhor ponto de partida talvez esteja, para além da necessária despersonalização, na reformulação do discurso político, nomeadamente português e brasileiro, que tem acompanhado o anúncio do projecto da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa e também no abrandamento da dinâmica tendencialmente luso-brasileira. Em relação ao primeiro vector, seria aconselhável uma certa cautela nas afirmações passíveis de serem conotadas com formas de neocolo-

nialismo cultural e abandonar a fórmula comunidade de *afectos e interesses* e a sua variante comunidade de *língua e afectos*. De facto, a chamada insistente aos afectos poderá ser despropositada, uma vez que os verdadeiros amigos não necessitam de declarar constante e mutuamente a sua amizade e, no caso presente, tratando-se de relações internacionais, e por via de artifícios linguísticos do discurso político, os sentimentos e as emoções dificilmente condicionarão ou se equacionarão com os interesses. A ser necessária uma fórmula, talvez fosse mais funcional a dos *interesses e valores*, dependendo estes últimos da concertação das *sete memórias* quanto à herança comum e das *sete perspectivas* quanto ao futuro ou futuros possíveis. Quanto ao segundo vector, será sem dúvida necessário implantar uma *sinergia lusófona,* que reproduza realmente uma dinâmica luso-afro-brasileira, que reconheça e reproduza globalmente a validade do *conceito de lusofonia* e em que se encontrem alinhados os motivos que justificam um sistema de cooperação lusófona, conforme Adriano Moreira, referindo-se às relações Portugal-PALOP, apontou há já alguns anos:

> É fácil procurar fazer coincidir tais motivos com os que caracterizam a acção das antigas democracias ocidentais colonizadoras de África, mas o que mais importa é recriar uma motivação especificamente portuguesa e dos africanos. Como é regra nas relações internacionais, tais motivos precisam de se traduzir em interesses reconhecidos comuns, e que um equilíbrio possa ser estabelecido na relação a implantar, podendo os encargos superiores numa área ser compensados com benefícios, nem sempre materiais, noutra área.

Uma revisão do conceito de Lusotropicalismo, relendo Gilberto Freyre e divulgando a sua tese da originalidade e individualidade histórica da adaptação da Cultura Portuguesa a ambientes tropicais, criaria uma opinião favorável ao integral aproveitamento de inúmeros estudos e projectos elaborados no período colonial, que do ponto de vista técnico e científico continuam ainda hoje a ser válidos para o Desenvolvimento dos Países Africanos Lusófonos. Um terceiro vector seria a criação de apoios eficazes à produção dos agentes culturais lusófonos, nomeadamente e sobretudo no campo dos audiovisuais, com a produção de filmes históricos e de adaptação de obras literárias, e de documentários sobre as mais variadas facetas da realidade social e ecológica dos sete países, com especial incidência em África numa primeira fase. A realização de eventos culturais de impacto mediático seria também uma componente importante, como por exemplo uma Bienal das Artes Lusófonas ou um

Festival da Lusofonia aberto às mais variadas manifestações culturais.

Finalmente, para aproveitar todas as potencialidades lusófonas, seria útil rever a proposta de Adriano Moreira na sequência da observação anterior—duas estruturas federativas dedicadas à investigação e ensino de questões relacionadas com o Desenvolvimento: "*Um Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa, no qual participariam por igual todos os Estados que a adoptassem como forma de expressão geral do povo ou forma oficial de expressão*" e "*uma Universidade Internacional Luís de Camões*" que rompesse com "*conceitos, ou preconceitos, da clássica organização da investigação e do ensino,*" congregando os vários organismos vocacionados para o efeito, e que "*teria especialmente em vista os cursos de especialização, mestrado e doutoramento, baseados no acesso documental e de experiência que interessa a todos*" (22; 82-84).

Estas estruturas são ainda passíveis de serem criadas de raiz, preferencial e necessariamente sob estatutos não-governamentais, alterando-se-lhes os nomes, ou então projectá-las como uma única que funcionasse como Instituto de Cooperação. Tendo em conta um critério geoestratégico e de descentralização e solidariedade lusófona, talvez a sua localização em S. Tomé e Príncipe, mesmo parcialmente, fosse uma hipótese a considerar. Contudo, este projecto implicaria um certo tempo, o tempo necessário, de preparação, concertação e montagem financeira que para todos seria vantajoso que se processasse no âmbito do moderno tipo de relações Universidade-Empresa.

Construindo assim o Consenso, estaríamos a lançar bases duradouras de uma verdadeira Comunidade Luso-Afro-Brasileira, uma Comunidade Lusófona que consequentemente se projectaria politicamente na comunidade internacional. Uma *Carta da Lusofonia*, reunindo um conjunto de princípios humanistas e universalistas, sintetizando os legados das três identidades culturais—Portugalidade, Brasilidade e Africanidade—poderia ser o contributo lusófono para a emergente Filosofia do século XXI.

Notas

[1] Comunicação ao Colóquio *Construção e Ensino da História de África*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 7 a 9 de Junho de 1994.

[2] A crítica do conceito de Lusotropicalismo enquanto ideologia tornou-se comum a partir dos anos 50/60 no discurso anticolonialista e principalmente nos autores marxistas e neomarxistas que produziram análises sobre a África Lusófona. Trata-se de um erro metodológico, de um desvio de análise da realidade imposto muitas vezes pelo apriorismo político. *O Lusotropicalismo*

não é uma ideologia, o Lusotropicalismo é uma teoria interdisciplinar de base sociológica (Gonçalves; Bastide; Freyre; Moreira; Macedo).

[3] Por exemplo, a preocupação fundamental, que ainda hoje existe em África, de promover a integração do Direito Moderno com a pluralidade dos Direitos Tradicionais, para se processar efectivamente a implantação do Estado de Direito.

[4] Para além da vulgarização dos Crioulos na Guiné-Bissau, Cabo Verde e S. Tomé e Príncipe, a taxa de falantes da Língua Portuguesa na Guiné-Bissau, Angola e Moçambique parece não ultrapassar 15% do total da população de cada país. Do ponto de vista demográfico, a Lusofonia em África (20 milhões) é significativamente menor que a Anglofonia (200 milhões) e que a Francofonia (125 milhões). Politicamente, este facto traduz-se em menor influência no seio das organizações internacionais.

[5] Na perspectiva do Marketing, verifica-se um *efeito de halo* quando "uma das componentes do produto pode ser registada tão incisivamente, para bem ou para mal, que o conjunto da percepção se orientará nesse sentido" (Dayan 62).

[6] O Congresso foi realizado em Moçambique, de 13 a 23 de Julho de 1967, a bordo do navio Príncipe Perfeito, pela União das Comunidades de Cultura Portuguesa, iniciativa de Adriano Moreira. O 1º Congresso tinha sido realizado em Lisboa em 1964. O 3º Congresso, marcado para o Brasil em 1969, nunca se chegou a realizar.

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A representação da mulher nas cantigas de capoeira

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Resumo: Este artigo analisa a representação da mulher nas cantigas de capoeira, examinando a função ética e didática das letras das canções. Compara algumas semelhanças temáticas entre as cantigas e o cancioneiro da Música Popular Brasileira (MPB), estabelecendo vínculos entre a representação da mulher na tradição da MPB e nas rodas da capoeira. Este estudo avalia também a mensagem misógina de muitas letras, contrapondo-a ao processo de transformação que tem ocorrido nos círculos de capoeira. A presença de vozes femininas de destaque, o questionamento do descaso à mulher e as canções novas são aspectos que têm contribuído para recodificar a imagem feminina nas cantigas e no jogo.

As cantigas de capoeira têm uma função lúdica, ética e didática. São utilizadas nas rodas como uma cartilha de ensino, servindo para sedimentar as regras do jogo e para transmitir a história e a filosofia da capoeira. Muitas delas falam de concepções do mundo, valores morais e códigos de conduta, delineiam uma visão filosófica, louvam a Deus e recontam lendas e provérbios populares. Outras descrevem os usos, costumes e folclores da Bahia, apresentam fragmentos da história do Brasil, referem-se à escravidão negra e à perseguição da polícia, homenageiam personagens históricos como Zumbi e cantam os grandes mestres da capoeira. Há ainda aquelas que analisam as regras do

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 463-77.
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jogo/luta, descrevem a malícia e a malandragem, homenageiam o berimbau e examinam as ações e reações dos parceiros/adversários. Como símbolos de resistência cultural, as cantigas de capoeira traçam os rudimentos históricos da diáspora africana no Brasil e indicam mudanças socioculturais. As cantigas também revelam dados importantes sobre as relações de gênero e o papel que a mulher tem desempenhado nos círculos capoeiristas.

Os três tipos mais comuns de cantigas são: a ladainha, a chula e o corrido. A ladainha é uma litania longa, uma narrativa introdutória que é entoada nas rodas da Capoeira Angola e que deve ser cantada por um mestre ou por alguém que tenha sua permissão ou respeitabilidade no universo da capoeira. É dirigida aos jogadores que vão entrar na roda e que, acocorados ao pé do berimbau, concentram-se para participar do jogo. Enquanto ela é cantada, não se realiza "jogo físico," aproveitando-se o momento para a compreensão da mensagem da letra que invoca idéias e valores importantes para o contexto do jogo em geral. A chula segue a ladainha e funciona de maneira semelhante: as frases escolhidas podem prestar homenagem a um aspecto do jogo, agradecer a Deus, falar de mestres e valores morais, descrever situações histórico-culturais, mas é mais curta do que a ladainha e serve para sinalizar o início do jogo. Os corridos são cantados por todos da roda como resposta aos movimentos e às jogadas. São cantos ainda mais curtos do que a chula e têm o ritmo mais acelerado. No entanto, não há uma divisão rígida entre os tipos de cantigas, pois chulas e corridos são, às vezes, tratados como um tipo só (Barbosa, "A gramática" 80-81).

A maioria das cantigas de capoeira é de domínio público, tendo passado de mestres a alunos por várias gerações. É, portanto, muito difícil precisar a data em que foram compostas ou verificar as transformações que sofreram. Como Waldeloir Rego pondera: "é por demais perigoso se tentar distinguir cantiga de capoeira antiga da atual e, de um modo geral, cantiga de capoeira propriamente dita e cantiga de proveniência outra, cantada no jogo de capoeira" (89). Portanto, é comum que as cantigas corroborem certos estereótipos encontrados na sociedade brasileira, tornando-se assim um dos espaços onde se pode comprovar com mais acuidade a atitude misógina que domina as rodas de capoeira.

As letras das canções muitas vezes gabam o poder masculino e menosprezam a mulher. Sob esse prisma, há algumas semelhanças temáticas entre as cantigas de capoeira, especialmente os corridos, e as letras de algumas canções da Música Popular Brasileira (MPB). Em "A Mulher Faz e Desfaz o Homem," um estudo sobre as relações entre homem e mulher na construção social da

identidade brasileira, Ruben George Oliven examina composições de Lupicínio Rodrigues, Noel Rosa e Ataulfo Alves, entre outros autores. Analisa tematicamente a representação da mulher nesse cancioneiro e a grande repercussão que as canções tiveram no imaginário popular. O autor discute a presença feminina nas letras dessas músicas e conclui que a mulher é descrita como pivô de discórdia e de conflito, como traidora e como pessoa infiel. Oliven examina também a representação do espaço público e do privado na MPB, centrando sua análise no que denomina de "economia do trabalho e do afeto," e nos protótipos das "mulheres-âncora" e "mulheres-bússola," ou seja, aquelas que assentam ou guiam o homem. Limita a sua análise à música dos anos trinta, quarenta e cinqüenta, mas suas conclusões podem-se estender a outros sambas, modinhas, canções da bossa-nova, samba-reggae e outros ritmos, numa trajetória temporal dos anos sessenta até os nossos dias.[1]

Semelhante ao que acontece no cancioneiro da MPB, algumas cantigas de capoeira freqüentemente codificam valores morais e sociais ao descrever a mulher como coisa possuída, ser inferior, objeto de prazer sexual ou empecilho para o bem-estar masculino. O homem é descrito como aquele que dita as normas de comportamento, geralmente determinando o que a mulher pode ou não vestir, se deve ou não cortar o cabelo, usar maquiagem, ou trabalhar fora de casa. O corrido "A Mulher para Ser Bonita" exemplifica tal tradição: "A mulher pra ser bonita, Paraná, / Não precisa se pintar, Paraná. / A pintura é do demônio, Paraná. / Beleza é Deus quem dá, Paraná."[2]

Esta cantiga lembra "Marina," de Dorival Caymmi, canção em que a voz poética critica a mulher por ter se maquiado. Tanto na música de Caymmi quanto na estrofe acima citada, a maquiagem é renegada, sendo considerada algo que entristece o homem apaixonado ("Marina") e coisa do "demônio" ("A Mulher para Ser Bonita"). A maquiagem é considerada símbolo de chamariz sexual e de truques usados pelas mulheres consideradas "vulgares" para atrair parceiros sexuais. De modo que, tanto para Caymmi quanto para o imaginário da capoeira, a mulher recatada evitaria se pintar. Diante das grandes conquistas femininas nas últimas décadas, tal tentativa de controle social da mulher parece obsoleta. No entanto, nota-se que a cantiga de capoeira citada continua a ser cantada nas rodas e que "Marina" é considerada uma das obras-primas de Caymmi. Tais fatos confirmam a hipótese de que alguns valores morais inculcados através das letras dessas canções ainda sobrevivem, apesar de todas as conquistas femininas.

As únicas imagens da mulher nas cantigas tradicionais de capoeira em que ela não é menosprezada ou criticada aparecem naquelas que fazem referências

às figuras míticas da mãe, da avó ou de Nossa Senhora. Nesse caso, ela é reverenciada e colocada num plano superior, aquele que o imaginário popular confere ao modelo de virtude que a mãe e a santa representam. Tanto a figura da mãe, da avó, quanto a de Nossa Senhora, pertencem ao modelo das "mulheres-âncora" e das "mulheres-bússola" a que Oliven se refere.

Cerca de vinte e cinco por cento das trezentas e noventa e sete cantigas catalogadas para este estudo fazem referência à mulher. Entre esse percentual, doze mencionam a mãe e a avó como fonte de apoio e segurança emocional e cinco invocam a Virgem Maria, a suprema representação da figura materna. Um exemplo é "Valha-me Nossa Senhora," de domínio público, em que a voz poética recorre à Mãe de Jesus como símbolo de poder divino e como âncora e bússola. Paradoxalmente, de todas as condições descritas, das quais a voz poética pede a proteção da Virgem, ser mulher é a mais baixa na escala de valores:

> Valha-me, Nossa Senhora,
> Mãe de Deus de Nazaré.
> A vaca mansa dá leite.
> A "braba" dá quando quer.
> A mansa dá sossegada,
> A "braba" levanta o pé.
> Já fui barco, fui navio
> E hoje sou "iscalé."
> Já fui linha de meada
> Hoje sou de carretel.
> Já fui menino, sou homem,
> Só me falta ser mulher.
> Valha-me, Nossa Senhora,
> Mãe de Deus de Nazaré. (cit. em Bola Sete 98)

Ao se comparar a maneira como a mulher é descrita nas cantigas de capoeira com o que se diz do homem, nota-se que ele é apresentado de maneira muito mais positiva. É o conhecedor dos segredos do jogo, astucioso, perigoso, vaidoso e sedutor. Nota-se também que ele enfrenta qualquer batalha, luta bravamente contra inimigos na guerra (há várias referências à Guerra do Paraguai), além de ser astuto e inteligente, pois consegue ludibriar a polícia e se esquivar dos valentões. Mesmo quando as cantigas fazem referências à malandragem ou à vadiagem, o universo masculino não é descrito de maneira

pejorativa. A malandragem ou a vadiagem são vistas como metáforas do próprio jogo, adquirindo o sentido positivo de sagacidade e flexibilidade. Descarta-se assim a conotação negativa que estas palavras adquiriram em outros contextos, em que são usadas para indicar aversão ao trabalho ou para simbolizar parasitismo social. Vê-se, por exemplo, a celebração da vadiagem em "Foi Agora Que Cheguei":

> Foi agora que cheguei,
> já mandaram eu vadiar.
> O meu mestre me ensinou,
> meu dever é ir lutar.[3]

Letícia Vidor de Sousa Reis direcionou minha atenção para o fato de que, em algumas cantigas, a mulher é considerada fofoqueira e, em contrapartida, o homem é tido como pessoa discreta.[4] Desta maneira, é possível atribuir-lhe mais uma qualidade positiva: o capoeirista não gosta de fofoca ou não se envolve em "conversa de comadres." O seguinte corrido, de domínio público, cantado em forma de diálogo entre duas mulheres, corrobora a observação de Reis:

> — Minha comadre, até você?
> Falou de mim, minha comadre.
> — Eu não falei, minha comadre.
> — Falou que eu vi, minha comadre.
> — Eu não vou na sua casa, minha comadre,
> Pra você não ir na minha, minha comadre.
> — Você tem a boca grande, minha comadre,
> Vai comer minha farinha, minha comadre. (cit. em Bola Sete 149)

As cantigas de capoeira apresentam uma grande riqueza de figuras de linguagem e uma variedade de significados. Há muitos aforismos que funcionam como pequenos quebra-cabeças lingüísticos, e as inversões de sentido, as metáforas e a linguagem simbólica também são comuns.[5] Por exemplo, em "Minha Comadre, Até Você" há uma fala dupla que pode ser interpretada tanto como uma referência à mulher como uma análise do próprio jogo. A reação contra a "gulodice" do adversário leva o jogador atrevido ou "guloso" a cair na artimanha do jogo, ou seja, "comer da farinha." De modo que a "boca grande" pode

referir tanto ao falar demais (a fofoca ou gabolice) como à audácia do jogador de tentar fazer jogadas ousadas demais (tentou "comer" mais do que devia). Além disto, é fato que, no imaginário popular brasileiro, chamar um homem de mulher ("comadre") é uma forma de diminuir-lhe o valor ou de provocá-lo para a briga. Nesse cenário, o "jogador-comadre" é o maricas, o homem medroso ou efeminado; portanto, é considerado um ser inferior ou desprezível que merece apanhar no jogo. Em suma, vê-se que tanto a representação da mulher como fofoqueira, quanto o uso do vocábulo "comadre" para diminuir o valor do jogador, são índices de que as cantigas tradicionais de capoeira costumam refletir as atitudes misóginas comuns na sociedade brasileira.

Em muitos casos, a mulher ainda é vista como um pequeno complemento da função masculina. Essa atitude de superioridade que o homem costuma assumir e o papel secundário que se reserva para a mulher estão resumidos nas metáforas do pandeiro (função musical de importância) e das palmas (função complementar na Capoeira Regional e nos estilos híbridos).Veja a seguinte canção tradicional, de domínio público, muito cantada nas rodas de capoeira: "Minha mãe 'tá me chamando, / Oh! que vida de mulher! / Quem toca pandeiro é homem, / Quem bate palmas é mulher." Várias cantigas criticam sumariamente a mulher, classificando-a como um ser ciumento, infiel, traidor e malvado. Há, no seguinte corrido, queixas contra a mulher, desprezando-a por ser a causa da desgraça do homem: "Minha mãe sempre dizia / Que a mulher matava homem. / Agora acabei de crer: / Quando não mata, consome" (domínio público, cit. em Bola Sete 101).

As cantigas costumam condenar o ciúme feminino, mas em momento algum investigam as causas que levaram a mulher a duvidar do homem. Não comentam, por exemplo, a infidelidade masculina e não analisam as atitudes do homem ciumento ou o uso da força física contra as mulheres. As cantigas tradicionais apresentam uma visão unilateral do ciúme, visto por meio do olhar do homem e pela voz masculina. O corrido "Casa de Palha é Palhoça" é um exemplo típico da cantiga que vê o ciúme como uma doença e que expressa a repulsa à mulher ciumenta, considerando-a um ser vil: "Casa de palha é palhoça, / se eu fosse fogo queimava. / Toda mulher ciumenta, / se eu fosse a morte matava" (domínio público, cit. em Bola Sete 112).

Na chula "O Calado é Vencedor," também do cancioneiro popular, a mulher é descrita como uma pessoa malvada, traiçoeira, venenosa, sem escrúpulos e sem compaixão. Por isso, é comparada a uma cobra: "O calado é vencedor (Coro) / Para quem juízo tem, / Quem espera ser vingado / não roga praga em ninguém.

/ A mulher é como a cobra, / tem sangue de 'peçanha', / deixa o rico na miséria, oi, meu bem, / deixa o pobre sem vergonha" (cit. em Bola Sete 117).

Há cantigas que também se referem ao homem capoeirista como cobra, mas quando isto acontece não é para diminuir-lhe o valor ou estigmatizar o jogador. Por exemplo, o corrido "A Cobra Me Morde" é uma representação da agilidade, precisão e estratégias de ataque e defesa do capoeirista. Ao mesmo tempo que canta a cobra/parceiro do jogo como "danada," "venenosa" e capaz de destruir ("cobra me morde"), também louva as suas qualidades, pois ela é "valente" e destemida. A ambivalência da palavra cobra, que no uso popular significa tanto pessoa de má índole quanto indivíduo perito na sua arte, está presente nesse corrido. Por meio de associações metafóricas, essa cantiga compara o jogador e o seu veneno a uma cobra, exemplificando a malícia, analisando a sedução lúdica das manobras corporais e alertando sobre o perigo inerente em cada jogada:

Esta cobra te morde,
Ô, sinhô São Bento! (Coro)
Ôi, o bote da cobra,
Ôi, a cobra mordeu,
O veneno da cobra,
Ôi, a casca da cobra,
Ô que cobra danada,
Ô que cobra malvada,
Buraco velho
Ô que cobra danada.
Tem cobra dentro
Ôi, o pulo da cobra.
Ê compadre. (cit. em Rego 94-95)

Nesta canção, o jogador emula a flexibilidade e a precisão da serpente (vista como algo positivo) e reflete a própria duplicidade da cobra, cujo veneno pode matar, mas que também é usado como soro antiofídico. Em termos comparativos, essa ambivalência não está presente em "O Calado é Vencedor" pois só discute os aspectos destrutivos da mulher-cobra, analisando-os como fatores biológicos, inerentes à sua condição feminina ("tem sangue de peçanha"), como pessoa mesquinha e gananciosa ("deixa o rico na miséria"), e sem padrões morais, pois desonra o homem e faz dele um ser torpe ("deixa o pobre sem vergonha").

Em muitas das cantigas mencionadas anteriormente, a violência contra a mulher é de cunho psicológico e aparece mascarada por apelos emocionais. Mas há cantigas em que a violência não está camuflada e que também ensinam atos cruéis contra a população feminina, descrevem as atitudes controladoras e disciplinares do homem e desmerecem a mulher de forma acintosa. Nessas cantigas, ela não tem voz nem desejo e está à mercê dos castigos impostos. É freqüente que o homem também seja descrito como uma vítima da traição da mulher ou como aquele que se encontra emocionalmente moribundo.

Há o pressuposto de que o sofrimento afetivo masculino justifica a violência física e psicológica ou o comportamento agressivo contra suas companheiras. Veja, por exemplo, três cantigas muito populares nas rodas de capoeira, de domínio público, que abordam os "castigos" como uma forma disciplinar e servem como cartilha do bem-estar do homem.[5] Na primeira cantiga, maldiz-se a mulher ciumenta, pois o seu ciúme é mal que pode afligir ou irritar um homem mais que uma goteira na casa, uma criança que chora sem parar ou um cavalo de má cavalgadura. O ensinamento primordial é que o capoeirista deve evitar se relacionar com mulheres ciumentas já que para este tipo de "doença" não há remédio:

São quatro coisas no mundo
que ao homem consome:
uma casa pingando,
um cavalo "chotão,"
uma mulher ciumenta,
um menino chorão.
Tudo isso ele dá jeito:
a casa ele retelha,
o cavalo "negoceia,"
o menino acalenta,
a mulher ciumenta cai na peia. (cit. em Mestre Reinaldo)

A segunda canção ensina que uma forma eficaz de controlar a mulher insubordinada é o racionamento da sua comida (como se estivesse treinando um animal): "Se essa mulher fosse minha, / Eu ensinava a viver. / Dava feijão com farinha / A semana todinha / Pra ela comer."[6]

A terceira cantiga vai mais longe e sugere claramente o uso da palmatória e/ou a necessidade de descartar a mulher como se ela fosse um objeto indesejá-

vel: "Xique-Xique, moçambira / Mandacaru, palmatória. / A mulher quando não presta, / O homem manda embora" (cit. em Bola Sete 92).

Há também cantigas em que a representação da mulher é um pouco mais sofisticada, pois dá margem a outras interpretações. Mesmo que corrobore alguns estereótipos comuns na literatura e no imaginário popular, a cantiga "Saia do Mar, Marinheiro," de domínio público, aborda o "princípio feminino" e a metáfora da sedução. A letra desta canção exemplifica a malícia e a ambigüidade que são partes integrantes do jogo de capoeira, mas refere-se também à mulher, já que se acredita que ela incorpora a duplicidade do papel de sedutora. Ela é a sereia cuja energia aliciadora atrai o parceiro/adversário para a jogada e a marinheira que também se sente atraída pelo magnetismo do jogo:

> Saia do mar, marinheiro! (Coro)
> Vou m'bora pro estrangeiro.
> Amanhã vou embarcar, marinheiro.
> Se você quiser me ver
> Jogue seu navio no mar, marinheiro.
> Marinheiro, quando em vela
> As sereias cantam no mar, marinheiro.
> Saia do mar, marinheiro,
> Saia do mar, estrangeiro. (cit. em Bola Sete 130)

Considerando-se a longa tradição da capoeira no Brasil, as suas diversas fases, estilos e sua recente globalização, não surpreende que mudanças positivas comecem a tomar corpo, tanto na representação da imagem da mulher nas cantigas, quanto na atitude dos capoeiristas. Apesar de todo preconceito contra a mulher na capoeira, os homens mais esclarecidos sempre rejeitaram as cantigas que servem para denegrir a imagem feminina. É ainda bom lembrar que a atitude machista de vários jogadores, representada também nas letras das canções de capoeira, contraria os princípios da filosofia do jogo / luta / ritual. O seguinte aforismo, atribuído a Mestre Pastinha, confirma tais diretrizes: "A capoeira é para homem, menino e mulher / Só não aprende quem não quer." (cit. em Pequeno e Machado 8). É o que atesta também o seguinte corrido tradicional, de domínio público, muito cantado nas rodas de capoeira: "Sai, sai, Catarina, (Coro) / Venha pro mar. / Venha ver Idalina, / Venha ver, Catarina" (cit. em Bola Sete 133).

Se as cantigas de capoeira têm a função de conectar a energia da roda, redimensionando os movimentos e representando a malícia do jogo pelo discurso lúdico e evasivo do significado das palavras, elas não poderiam deixar de indicar as mudanças que a mulher trouxe para as rodas de capoeira. Atualmente, não é mais uma raridade que as capoeiristas questionem as letras tradicionais em que a afirmação da masculinidade se faz por meio da negação da mulher. Por exemplo, muitas mulheres se recusam a cantar certas canções, fazem mudanças nas letras daquelas mais misóginas e até têm composto as suas próprias cantigas. Uma em que se percebe essa mudança é o corrido "Dendê de Aro Amarelo," de domínio público, que na sua versão original enfatiza o valor do homem e desmerece a mulher: "Oi dendê, oi dendê, / Dendê de aro amarelo / Eu vou dizer a dendê: / Sou homem, não sou mulher" (cit. em Bola Sete 144).

Atualmente, é comum que a letra desse corrido seja invertida pelas mulheres que mudam a ordem dos valores ("Eu sou mulher / Não sou homem"), demarcando o espaço de diferenciação de gênero e estabelecendo a sua presença na roda. Tal inversão na ordem da letra da cantiga serve também para ajudar a mulher a prestigiar e a negociar a sua própria presença no jogo. Ao mudar a ordem das palavras no canto, elas lembram aos companheiros que a filosofia da capoeira prega a igualdade e o respeito. A mudança na ordem das palavras não parece ser uma simples reversão do binômio homem / mulher, mas uma conscientização de que as mulheres hoje constituem cerca de quarenta por cento da população que joga/estuda capoeira.[7] A inversão serve, portanto, para advogar o princípio de que as rodas de capoeira são um espaço de mediação social, onde não deve haver discriminação de sexo, idade ou raça.

Mesmo que o convite tenha sido feito para a mulher entrar na roda do jogo de capoeira, há uma desafagem cultural e temporal que separa o seu desempenho quantitativo e qualitativo. Enquanto os homens se beneficiam do fato de que a capoeira tem uma longa tradição masculina e de mestres que servem de modelos para as gerações de rapazes e meninos, só nos últimos vinte anos, as mulheres começaram a ganhar sistematicamente tal projeção e apoio. Se a barreira social que discriminava a capoeira como um jogo / luta / ritual exclusivamente masculino já foi desmoronada, pelo menos em parte, há ainda outros fatores, como a defasagem temporal e cultural, a violência, a maior força e domínio físico do corpo, as normas de conduta machista que constituem um empecilho para que a mulher não compita com o homem em termos de igualdade numérica nos escalões mais avançados da capoeira. Algumas mulheres se sentem desencorajadas a continuar porque acham que concorrem em condi-

ções de desigualdade. Além disso, percebe-se que a capoeira tradicional privilegia as normas de conduta machistas. Mas, à medida que o debate e a discussão sobre o papel e o lugar da mulher na capoeira começam a ganhar destaque, o espaço real dela também se amplia. O número de mulheres capoeiristas cresce e o reconhecimento de sua participação no jogo ganha destaque.[8]

Essas mudanças positivas estão registradas nas cantigas mais novas que foram compostas por mulheres. Esta nova faceta—letras de cantigas que se preocupam com a mulher capoeirista—contrasta com as canções tradicionais que celebram a força e a dominação masculinas, e identificam uma voz feminina atuante. Um exemplo é a ladainha "Força Guerreira," de Ively Mayumi Nagaye Viccari, que enfatiza qualidades geralmente associadas à mulher. Ainda que a definição da força da mulher nessa cantiga se baseie em estereótipos do universo feminino, ou numa visão essencialista (intuição, ciclos, sedução e faceirice), essa ladainha se destaca por descrever a atuação ativa da mulher e instituir uma ligação entre ela, a capacidade de criação, a sagacidade e a malícia que o jogo de capoeira exige.

Como muitas canções tradicionais de capoeira, "Força Guerreira" tem uma função metapoética, pois analisa a história da capoeira (referências à escravidão e à resistência cultural), discute a etimologia da palavra capoeira ("mato ralo") e a origem do próprio jogo e das suas manhas ("a intuição" e "a energia interna"). Mas além dessas características, estabelece outros parâmetros, buscando conscientizar a mulher capoeirista dos seus direitos e da sua força:

Força guerreira, que não só
pelo físico, mas pela intuição
e energia interna.
Aflorada quando necessário
para defender o alimento
de seu filho, de sua linhagem,
de seu povo, de toda sua espécie.
O princípio que vem da terra,
de suas entranhas,
e mistura-se ao "mato-ralo"
não para submeter-se,
mas demonstrando toda
a sua sabedoria.
Capaz de envolver o mais "cruel,"

porém, menos "sabido" senhor,
com seu jeito faceiro,
que se espalhou pelo universo.
Fazendo a conexão como um todo
Abrindo e fechando ciclos
Como o princípio da existência (a respiração).
Muito bem centrada em seu útero,
porém, com grande generosidade
capaz de doar-se
não só a seus filhos,
mas aos de outros também.
Bela e vaidosa
como uma obra de arte, de vida,
de resistência e sobrevivência
mas, principalmente de prazer [...] de "fruição."

Nota-se, portanto, que a presença quantitativa e qualitativa da mulher nas academias e nas agremiações começa a mudar a dinâmica das rodas de capoeira, contribuindo para que as cantigas tradicionais sejam reavaliadas e para que novas ladainhas, chula e corridos substituam aquelas em que a mulher é denegrida e subestimada. O aparecimento de vozes femininas no âmbito das rodas e dos grupos de capoeira não significa que haja uma tentativa de polarizar os círculos masculinos e femininos do jogo ou criar tensões entre homens e mulheres. Trata-se de estabelecer modelos femininos que possam contribuir para a formação da mulher capoeirista, sedimentar um ambiente de mais respeito e camaradagem no jogo, questionar a ideologia do descaso à mulher e desmascarar o discurso misógino das cantigas tradicionais.

Não há mais dúvidas de que a mulher já contribuiu substancialmente para estabelecer um maior equilíbrio entre a energia masculina e feminina nas rodas. Essa energia está representada também no diálogo entre os acordes agudos e os sons surdos do berimbau, que, às vezes, são vistos como uma interação entre os elementos masculino e feminino da capoeira. Quando analisados sob essa ótica, os tons surdos e agudos do berimbau passam a simbolizar a filosofia do jogo / luta / ritual que não discrimina gênero, raça ou idade. Indicam também uma mediação de gêneros, pois tradicionalmente os toques do berimbau funcionam como moderadores dos ânimos da roda. Portanto, as letras das canções que subestimam a mulher na sociedade brasileira e nas rodas de capo-

eira destoam dos acordes do berimbau e não se coadunam com os princípios estabelecidos na tradição dos grandes mestres como Pastinha e Bimba, que pregavam igualdade de gêneros, raça e idade.

Pelos movimentos de seu corpo e por seus cantos, a mulher capoeirista tem sagazmente traçado novas linhas no contexto cultural da capoeira, estabelecendo um processo de mediação e recodificando a interação e a sedução do jogo. Considerando-se as mudanças sociais ocorridas desde os anos setenta e todos os fatores que influenciaram a presença feminina na capoeira, é possível concluir que a mulher contemporânea está mapeando um espaço real nos círculos da capoeira e que mudanças positivas nas cantigas continuarão a ser implementadas. A mulher tem redimensionado o jogo de capoeira ao negociar um espaço sociocultural nas rodas, grupos e academias. Neste âmbito, as cantigas tradicionais que desmerecem a mulher tornam-se cada vez mais destoantes, pois não refletem o equilíbrio da dinâmica de gêneros que já se estabeleceu nos círculos mais esclarecidos.

Como forma de sobrevivência, as mulheres capoeiristas têm adotado um sincretismo cultural em que são ao mesmo tempo marinheiras destemidas e sereias cativantes. Valendo-se da linguagem figurada de Luiz da Câmara Cascudo, é possível concluir que, se as capoeiristas não possuem "o canto irresistível" das suas "irmãs mediterrâneas" nem a imensa paixão das "Mães d'Água do Brasil," são herdeiras das sereias africanas e retomam "a soberania dos seus distantes reinos encantados" (23). Utilizando a lógica do discurso sincrético e a *bricolage* cultural, as mulheres capoeiristas têm incorporado argúcia e estratégias especiais nas suas jogadas. Elas emergem nas rodas e nas academias de capoeira como novas iaras ou como herdeiras de Quianda, Quituba e Quiximbi, sereias angolanas que representam resistência, astúcia e coragem. As mulheres capoeiristas estão aprendendo a utilizar a própria sedução do jogo para estabelecer um espaço de respeito e consideração nas rodas. Atualmente elas já se inseriram na ambigüidade da luta / ritual da capoeira, emblematizando tanto a sedução daquela que canta para atrair o parceiro / adversário, quanto a coragem da destemida aventureira que embarcou no jogo com malícia, ginga e astúcia.

Agradecimento

Este estudo é parte de uma série de artigos desenvolvidos graças a uma bolsa de pesquisa que me foi concedida pelo National Endowment for the Humanities no verão de 2001.

Notas

[1] Veja, por exemplo, as seguintes canções: "Minha Namorada" de Carlinhos Lyra, "Cotidiano" de Chico Buarque, "Tropicana" e "Dois Animais" de Alceu Valença, bem como "Você Não Passa uma Mulher" de Martinho da Vila.

[2] Nem todas as cantigas de capoeira de domínio púbico já foram publicadas. Quando não encontrei fontes bibliográficas, utilizei gravações e transcrições de cantigas que eu mesma fiz durante as minhas visitas a rodas e academias de capoeira em Salvador (junho de 2000 e 2002), em São Paulo (julho de 2002) e no Rio de Janeiro (maio e outubro de 2003).

[3] Transcrevi esta canção, de domínio público, que escutei em várias rodas de capoeira.

[4] Conversa que tivemos em São Paulo, em 11 de julho de 2002.

[5] Essas cantigas ainda são muito cantadas nas rodas de capoeira e continuam a ser ensinadas por mestres e contra-mestres de capoeira tanto no Brasil como em outros países. Por exemplo, "Quatro coisas neste mundo" está incluída em uma ladainha composta por Mestre Reinaldo, do Grupo "Um Passo a Mais". Veja *Revista dos Mestres de Capoeira* 22 na lista das Obras Citadas.

[6] Transcrevi esta canção, de domínio público, que escutei em várias rodas de capoeira.

[7] Veja comentários tecidos por Rosângela Costa Araújo em "Contra Mestre."

[8] Veja, por exemplo, os encontros internacionais realizados pela Federação Internacional de Capoeira Angola (FICA International Women's Conference) e pela Annual Capoeira Angola Women's Conference (<www.angelfire.com/on/capoeiraangola>), os prêmios "Nzinga para a Mulher Brasileira" e a "Maratona Cultural Afro-brasileira" e vários torneios e encontros realizados pelo Grupo Capoeira ABADA (em <www.capoeira.com/planetcapoeira/view>).

[9] Para uma análise da trajetória da mulher na capoeira e dos fatores socioculturais responsáveis pela sua exclusão/inclusão no universo da capoeira, veja Barbosa, "A Trajetória."

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Pocahontas ataca de nuevo: *Iracema* o la importancia de la figura del mestizo en la sociedad brasileña actual

Cristina Sánchez-Conejero

Abstract: Since the discovery of Brazil in 1500 there have been a great number of writings in Brazilian Literature that deal with the figure of the Indian. It is well known that, especially in the Romantic period, the Indian character is highly idealized in most literary works. It is in this context that *Iracema* by José de Alencar appears, which bears astonishing similarities to the Pocahontas legend narrated by John Smith in *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles*. This paper has two main purposes: 1) to establish the parallels between *Iracema* and Pocahontas, both as literary works and in their social and historical significance; and 2) to divert the attention paid by Romantic writers from the Indian figure towards that of the mestizo as we see in Alencar's work, where the mestizo character Moacir sets the preamble of the racial mosaic in Brazilian society today. In this sense, it is imperative to establish the relevance of *Iracema* as a 19th century work with contemporary significance.

Desde el descubrimiento de Brasil en 1500 ha existido un gran número de escritos que tratan la cuestión de la figura del indio. Es bien sabido que, especialmente en el periodo romántico, el personaje indio resulta idealizado en la mayoría de las obras literarias. Es en este contexto en el que aparece *Iracema* de José de Alencar, que muestra asombrosas semejanzas con la leyenda de Pocahontas narrada por John Smith en *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles*. Este estudio tiene dos propósitos principales: 1) establecer los paralelismos

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 479-90.
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entre *Iracema* y la leyenda de Pocahontas, tanto como obras literarias como en su importancia social e histórica; y 2) desviar la atención prestada por los escritores románticos de la figura del indio hacia la del mestizo como vemos en la obra de Alencar, cuyo personaje mestizo Moacir sienta los preámbulos del mosaico racial en la sociedad brasileña actual. En este sentido, resulta imperativo establecer la relevancia de *Iracema* como obra decimonónica pero con relevancia contemporánea.

A partir del primer documento escrito sobre el descubrimiento de Brasil, existen testimonios literarios sobre la figura del indio. La *Carta* de Pero Vaz de Caminha ya contiene las primeras descripciones de los indios de Brasil en el siglo XVI, a los que muestra en su testimonio como "pardos, um tanto avermelhados, de bons rostos e bons narizes, bem feitos" (Arroyo 32). En pleno siglo barroco, el padre Antônio Vieira había descrito a la figura del indígena como victimizada por los colonizadores portugueses tal y como puede observarse en el *Sermão de San António* (1654). Un siglo más tarde, José Basílio da Gama nos había presentado en *O Uraguai* (1769) la idea del "buen salvaje" mediante el personaje de Cacambo y su lucha por la tierra que le pertenece. Con Antônio Gonçalves Dias en la primera mitad del siglo XIX asistimos a la idealización romántica del indio, con poemas como "Leito de fôlhas verdes" de *Primeiros cantos* (1847), cuyo personaje principal es una joven india que, como Iracema, perece esperando a su amado. Descritos de forma realista, victimizada o idealizada, lo cierto es que la figura del indio no aparece como símbolo de la nación e identidad brasileña hasta la producción del romance *Iracema* (1865) de José de Alencar.

Desde el momento en que los habitantes del Brasil decimonónico sienten necesidad de proyección de una identidad que los defina como brasileños y, a su vez, los diferencie de los portugueses colonizadores, empiezan a fluir por doquier romances donde la figura del indio aparece incuestionablemente venerada como héroe. Sólo basta echar una ojeada a *O Guaraní* (1857) o *Ubirajara* (1874), que forman parte junto con *Iracema* de la trilogía indianista de Alencar. Antônio Soares Amora ha resaltado en esta última obra la influencia del romance *Átala*. El crítico subraya en *A literatura brasileira: El Romantismo* cómo "de las fuentes literarias de *Iracema*, la más influyente en el espíritu de Alencar fue, sabidamente, *Átala*" (280). Naomi Lindstrom señala, además de esta fuente, la "literatura nacional" de James Fenimore Cooper, que a su vez fue influído por obras como el poema "The Lady of the Lake" (1810) de Sir Walter Scott.[1] Seguramente, Alencar tendría en mente los *Leather-*

stocking Tales, con novelas como *The Pioneers* (1823) o *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Soares Amora discute cómo, a partir de la "imitación artística" de *Átala*, Alencar creó un romance original. Sin embargo, el crítico centra exclusivamente su análisis de *Iracema* en una comparación con el romance de Chateaubriand, sin desarrollar las características que hacen de *Iracema* una obra original. Es lo que yo me propongo en este estudio. Dado el concepto de brasilidad que se deduce del romance alencariano, *Iracema* prueba ser mucho más que una "imitación artística" de *Átala*. Además, aparte de *Átala* y la obra de Fenimore Cooper, no pueden obviarse otras fuentes claras en la producción de Alencar, como la famosa leyenda de Pocahontas.

Iracema fue publicada en 1865, dos siglos después de que el capitán John Smith pisara tierra powhatana en 1607 y nos dejara en *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles* (1624) su testimonio escrito sobre su encuentro con la princesa india Pocahontas. La historia relatada por John Smith presenta ya claros rasgos románticos que también aparecerán en el romance de Alencar. Para empezar, la historia de Pocahontas está considerada como una leyenda, donde la imaginación del narrador y del pueblo que la recrea juega un papel crucial. No se sabe a ciencia cierta cuánto de verdad hay en la historia relatada por Smith. Como apunta The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities en "Pocahontas," "the first meeting of Pocahontas and John Smith is a legendary story, romanticized (if not entirely invented) by Smith" (1). Otros medios no literarios como el cine, tampoco han contribuído a ofrecer una visión más verídica sobre los hechos. David Morenus, en su artículo "The Real Pocahontas," resalta al respecto como la película de Disney *Pocahontas* ha recreado de manera ficticia gran parte de los hechos en el film:

> The physical appearance of Pocahontas and John Smith in the movie are fabricated to please modern tastes [...]. Pocahontas and John Smith are depicted as being young adults at the same time. Pocahontas was only a girl of twelve (or younger) when she met the veteran adventurer John Smith [...]. (2)

Iracema, del mismo modo, se trata de una leyenda. De hecho, el romance es subtitulado *Leyenda de Ceará*, y Alencar explica en el primer capítulo de *Iracema* cómo lo que va a relatar es "uma história que me contaram nas lindas várzeas onde nasci [...]" (23). La figura de Martim como representante del colonizador europeo que llega a tierras brasileñas sí existió como datan los textos de la historia. Ahora bien, el resto del romance, la figura de Iracema y el

romance entre ella y Martim fue pura invención de Alencar. De una manera absolutamente romántica, Alencar problematiza el confrontamiento colonizador/colonizado a través de los personajes de Martim e Iracema, con la muerte necesaria de esta última. En este sentido, *Iracema* puede considerarse una alegoría de la colonización portuguesa en Brasil.

Junto a este carácter legendario de las dos obras, resulta importantísima la atención confererida al personaje como ente individual, especialmente en su vertiente psicológica, tanto en *Pocahontas* como en *Iracema*: la primera aparece descrita desde las cartas testimoniales de John Smith como un ser tremendamente emotivo, al igual que en la película de Disney, que nos ofrece en todo momento el estado psicológico de la princesa india, feliz y enamorada cuando conoce a John Smith; triste y melancólica cuando éste debe volver a Londres; y furiosa y orgullosa al mismo tiempo en el momento en que se vuelve a encontrar a Smith en la ciudad inglesa ocho años después cuando, en realidad, ella lo creía muerto. Esta marcada atención al personaje es la misma con la que Alencar envuelve la descripción de Iracema. Son abundantes las referencias que a lo largo del romance existen sobre el estado emocional de la princesa india. Si al principio de su encuentro con Martim "o coração de Iracema está como o abati n'agua do rio" (47), cuando Iracema sufre el abandono del marido, "[...] sentiu que lhe chorava o coração" (71), hasta que la pérdida de la felicidad termina consumándola porque "a tristeza escurece a vista de Iracema, e amarga seu lábio" (91). Como la propia Iracema explica a Martim, "Iracema perdeu sua felicidade, depois que te separaste dela" (90). Y de tristeza termina muriendo la virgen de los labios de miel.

Según los datos de The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities en "Pocahontas," la princesa india muere de neumonía o posible tuberculosis, también muy joven. Resulta extremadamente significativo el hecho de que tanto en la leyenda de *Pocahontas* como en la de *Iracema* se haya utilizado la figura de una mujer, románticamente idealizada, con un destino fatal ya marcado. La muerte de las dos heroínas se hace necesaria para la conformación de un nuevo pueblo americano. Para ésto es menester la figura de un hijo mestizo: Thomas en el caso de Pocahontas y Moacir en el caso de Iracema. Es cierto que es la figura del indio (o india, en este caso) la que se resalta a lo largo de las dos obras como rasgo distintivo del pueblo americano del momento: junto con la naturaleza exótica, el indio en la leyenda de *Pocahontas* era lo que distinguía mayoritariamente al americano del inglés colonizador. Y el indio en *Iracema* era lo que, precisamente, daba carácter original a la identidad del

mayor pueblo en el continente sudamericano que luchaba por la proyección de una imagen que los diferenciara de los portugueses colonizadores. Por esta razón, debido a su posición de colonizador, difícilmente iba el portugués colonizador a ayudar a proyectar esta imagen. Y los esclavos africanos tampoco podían representar el carácter de lo brasileño, empezando por el hecho de que, además de ser esclavos, no eran nativos de las tierras brasileñas, sino que fueron traídos allí por los portugueses como mano de obra esclava. Por tanto, es así que comienza a venerarse la figura del indio durante la época romántica dado su carácter autóctono del Brasil. Es el indio quien va a marcar la pauta diferenciadora para la creación de una identidad propia y en base a quien tendrá lugar la reafirmación del carácter nacional en Brasil. Esta figura del indio está inspirada por las ideas de la filosofía de Rousseau a favor del hombre en su estado natural y del sentimiento. En contra del progreso y los avances de la civilización, la justicia creada por la sociedad civilizada es lo que, según Rousseau, priva al hombre de su libertad inherente. Como señala el filósofo,

> el paso del estado de naturaleza al estado civil produce en el hombre un cambio muy notable, sustituyendo en su conducta el instinto por la justicia, y dando a sus acciones la moralidad que les faltaba antes. [...]
> [...] Lo que el hombre pierde por el contrato social es su libertad natural y un derecho ilimitado a todo cuanto le tienta y que puede alcanzar." (cit. em Tejedor Campomanes 314-15)

Se trata, en definitiva, de la idea del "buen salvaje" a la que se refiere Tejedor Campomanes en su *Historia de la filosofía en su marco cultural*: "El hombre primitivo ("natural") vivía en aislamiento, imagina Rousseau: no poseía una sociabilidad natural ni (contra Hobbes) vivía en guerra contra los otros. Era el "buen salvaje": inocencia natural (no hay pecado original), ausencia de moral, bondad innata, igualdad" (286).

Es cierto que este culto a la figura india del "buen salvaje" como héroe de la nación brasileña fue un hecho a lo largo del movimiento romántico. Sin embargo, no podemos olvidar que es la figura del mestizo la que va a marcar el paradigma fundamental que define la sociedad brasileña actual. Se trata del "Third Space" o hibridismo del que habla Homi Bhabha y a través del cual sólo pueden entenderse las culturas de un pueblo: "*hibridity* [...] it is the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* [...] that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (209). Por ejemplo, el carácter híbrido

multirracial de los Estados Unidos hoy sólo se explica a partir de la mezcla de razas como las que tuvieron lugar entre Pocahontas y el colonizador John Rolfe con quien se casa, o la famosa Marina con Hernán Cortés, cuyo hijo representa el primer mexicano que hoy ocupa junto con otros hispanos el mayor grupo minoritario en los Estados Unidos. Si a esto se une el hecho de que además de indios, existían en las plantaciones norteamericanas esclavos africanos que fueron traídos posteriormente, las grandes oleadas de inmigrantes desde los comienzos del siglo XX llegadas a los Estados Unidos procedientes de todas partes del mundo, junto con la suspensión de las leyes contra los matrimonios interraciales en 1969, tenemos como resultado la heterogeneidad que caracteriza hoy al continente norteamericano.[2] Según los datos ofrecidos por Michael Howard y Roger Louis en *The Oxford History of the Twentieth Century*,

> Blacks, numbering 30 million in 1990, were around 12 per cent of the population. A total of 22 million people at that time told the Census Bureau that they were Hispanic; this was 9 per cent of the population, a percentage that was rapidly increasing. Legal immigrants, most of them Asian or Latin American, were arriving by the 1990s at a rate of close to a million per year. Many others came illegally. (166)

Del mismo modo, la multiplicidad surgida de la mezcla racial es la que hoy define la población en Brasil, de tal modo que David Hess señala en *The Brazilian Puzzle* cómo "'diversity' is really not the best word for describing Brazil and Brazilians; 'mixture' is better. Brazil is a nation of the mixing of races (miscegenation), religious (syncretism), and cultures (diasporas, borderlands)" (2). Si echamos un vistazo a los datos ofrecidos en "Brasil," en la actualidad, aproximadamente el 40% de la población brasileña es mestiza o mulata, el 54% descendiente de europeo y el 6% está formado por inmigrantes asiáticos. Este 40% representado por habitantes mestizos o mulatos es lo que verdaderamente confiere un carácter único a Brasil como nación, ya que, como apunta Edward Bradford Burns en *Nationalism in Brazil*,

> Gilberto Freyre has emphasized, in his classic study *The Master and the Slaves*, that the combination of three races, European, African, and Indian, resulted in the formation of a unique civilization. Nowhere in the hemisphere—nowhere in the world, for that matter—have the three races mixed together so freely and so extensively. Each has made contributions to the national language, diet, institu-

> tions, traditions, mores, and folklore. The result is a society distinct from any other in the world. (6)

La unión de Iracema con Martim y el nacimiento de Moacir resulta esencial para definir la situación de la población actual brasileña. Aunque se trate de una leyenda, sus rasgos alegóricos hacen referencia a los hechos históricos reales que ocurrieron en el hostil encuentro entre colonizador y colonizado. Moacir, primer mestizo en Brasil y, por extensión, el primer brasileño, significa "hijo del sufrimiento."[3] La misma Iracema concede a su hijo ese nombre: "Tu és Moacir, o nascido de meu sofrimento" (94). Precisamente, es éste sufrimiento el que va a ser necesario para el surgimiento de una nación nueva marcada por el mestizaje a través del sacrificio de Iracema. Ella representa el antiguo concepto de la nación norteamericana. Por este motivo, para el surgimiento del nuevo patrón racial que perdura hasta la actualidad, se hace necesario el sacrificio de Iracema. La heroína romántica está condenada a un destino mortal. Al igual que Pocahontas, Iracema debe morir para conceder paso a una nación brasileña moderna. Pocahontas, que desconoce los peligros de la sociedad civilizada, muere de neumonía en su regreso de Londres a Virginia, e Iracema perece de tristeza por el abandono de su amado colonizador.

Sin embargo, antes de morir, la princesa tabajara deja en brazos de Martim a su hijo mestizo—"Recebe o filho de teu sangue" (100)—de la misma manera que ya lo había hecho Pocahontas mientras agonizaba en su viaje de vuelta a Virginia: "All must die. 'Tis enough that the child liveth'" (cit. em "Pocahontas" 3). Si Thomas viene a representar la heterogeneidad racial que en la actualidad existe en los Estados Unidos, Moacir es el exponente máximo del mosaico racial que hoy por hoy, define Brasil. Es Moacir hijo del sufrimiento, del dolor de Iracema y, más importante, del dolor de toda una nación castigada desde el momento del descubrimiento en el siglo XVI por las injusticias de la colonización portuguesa, las guerras contra los indios, expropiación de tierras y esclavitud. Robert Levine nos informa cómo a comienzos del siglo XIX, "when the Portuguese Court delayed its return from Brazil, officials in Lisbon became hostile to Brazil, speaking with scorn of its backwardness and its multiracial population, and refusing to ship tax receipts to Brazil," lo cual "helped create in the colony a sense of Brazilian nationalism, paving the way for feelings of cultural pride" (58). De ahí la atención de Alencar por el personaje de Moacir y su implicación simbólica de "brasilidad"

como equivalente a mestizaje, que al mismo tiempo se corresponde con el hibridismo o "Third Space" de Bhabha. En palabras de Bradford Burns,

> [...] the newly arrived European [...] generally accepted the prevailing "mentality and morality" of the New World—in other words, he adapted to the new conditions. Consequently, the new arrival ceased to be a European, and became a "moral mestizo" [...]. His sons became both moral and physical mestizos. In his place appeared a new man, the combination first of the European and the Indian, and later, of the European, the Indian and the African. Thus, the Brazilian as an individual appeared centuries before Brazil emerged as an independent nation. (7-8)

Efectivamente, las mezclas raciales y sus consecuentes parámetros en la conformación de una identidad brasileña que estaban teniendo lugar desde el siglo XVI tanto en Norteamérica como en Sudamérica, sucedieron mucho antes de la independencia de Brasil en 1822 y el posterior sentimiento nacionalista que ésta conlleva. De ahí, la especial atención conferida a la figura del indio y, después de éste, a la figura del mestizo, más próxima a la realidad actual. Por esta razón, Moacir emerge como un personaje singular en *Iracema*. Si Iracema es la mujer romántica por excelencia, Moacir es el representante de la identidad brasileña actual. *Iracema* ha sido considerada por mucho tiempo como una obra romántica, y la mayoría de sus estudiosos se han centrado más en el personaje de Iracema—por exponer ésta los rasgos más acusados del Romanticismo, aparte de ser protagonista del romance—que en el de Moacir. La obra sí es indudablemente romántica, pero a través de la figura de Moacir, Alencar confirió a su romance una relevancia claramente actual. De este modo, el autor cearense se presenta no sólo como hombre de su época plenamente imbuído en las corrientes del Romanticismo, sino que además, Alencar fue un visionario al sentar los preámbulos que definen la sociedad brasileña actual, con la figura del mestizo a caballo entre su herencia europea e india al mismo tiempo. Como apunta David Treece en *Exiles, Allies, Rebels*,

> With the birth of the archetypal mestiço Brazilian, Moacyr, all that remains is for him to grow to maturity, to emerge from his exile between two lands, two peoples; [...] The mestiço child of Iracema and Martim, Moacyr, is more than simply the first citizen of a remote provincial settlement; he is the symbol of an entire Brazilian

> people that has been alienated from its mestiço identity and divorced from its indigenous roots. (194-95)

Esta toma de conciencia de una identidad mestiza característica de Brasil anticipa la cuestión nacionalista del país. El sentimiento de nacionalismo ya había surgido en el siglo XVI con lo que Hess y Da Matta denominan "nativismo colonial," que se extendió hasta el siglo XVIII, dando paso en el XIX a un "nacionalismo defensivo," donde por primera vez, la población del Brasil empieza a darse cuenta de la peculiaridad de su país y a desconfiar especialmente de todo lo extranjero.[4] El propio Alencar devotó sus esfuerzos a la proyección de una imagen brasileña a través de la literatura, no sólo mediante el uso del tópico del indianismo y las descripciones de la selva tropical, sino además, ofreciendo un lenguaje típico de Brasil, como puede apreciarse en el léxico tupí de *Iracema*, lo cual conecta con la idea de "print capitalism" de Benedict Anderson, la importancia de la imprenta y la directa relación entre la publicación de textos en una lengua específica y el nacionalismo de un país.[5]

Conscientes de esta peculiaridad de la nación brasileña, sus habitantes no sólo se enorgullecen de ella, sino que además, crean una literatura de acuerdo a los rasgos propios de su país como ya puede verse en los textos de *Los primeiros cantos* de Gonçalves Dias. Son los primeros atisbos de una literatura nacionalista en cuyos orígenes se hallaba la figura heroizada del indio en la epoca romántica. En las mismas muestras de literatura indianista encontramos ya retazos del individuo mestizo que hoy día conforma el 40% de la población en Brasil. *Iracema* de Alencar sería el ejemplo perfecto. Por tanto, la relevancia de estos romances indianistas se halla no sólo en la exaltación mitológica del indio, sino también en la importancia que estas obras tienen en una sociedad brasileña como la de principios del XXI mediante la presentación de la figura del mestizo. Es en la significación e interés actual de estas obras donde radica precisamente su importancia a la hora de examinar estos textos desde el siglo XXI.

Hoy día, siguiendo a los descendientes de europeos, es la figura del mestizo la que domina los porcentajes actuales de la población en Brasil. Muy poco queda ya del indio mitificado durante el período romántico. Las estadísticas ofrecidas por Sandra Cadwalader en "Native Americans" de 1990 reflejan las cifras minúsculas de nativos americanos a finales de los noventa: en los EUA casi dos millones o un 0.8% de la población total estadounidense; y en Brasil, la población cuyos antepasados son al 100% nativos ame-

ricanos constituyen un 0.2% de la población total brasileña. Sin embargo, el mestizo en Brasil ocupa, junto con el mulato, aproximadamente el 40% de la población, hecho que subraya la relevancia actual de una obra como *Iracema*, que todavía hoy sigue influenciando a lectores en cuanto a la idea de una sociedad interracial o mestiza. Como subraya Naomi Lindstrom en el prólogo a *Iracema*: *A Novel by José de Alencar*, con la lectura de *Iracema* "[...] North American readers will be reminded of the way that narratives of Pilgrims and Indians [...] have been elaborated to give the diverse U.S. population the sense of possessing a common past" (xiii).

Estos lectores pensarán en obras como *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles* o la película *Pocahontas*. Además, aparte de esta doble influencia entre los relatos de John Smith y el romance de Alencar, Iracema emerge como una obra de relevancia actual por su proyección de una identidad brasileña marcada por el mestizaje, el "Third Space" al que se refiere Bhabha. Cavalcanti Proença lo resume en su obra *José de Alencar na literatura brasileira* de la siguiente forma: "O índio e seu descendente mestiço sintonizam com a terra, são a própia América" (42). Así, como observa Bhabha, "by exploring this hybridity, this 'Third Space,' we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves" (209).

Notas

[1] Véase *Iracema: A Novel by José Alencar* (xiii).

[2] Leonard Dinnerstein apunta en "Immigration" como "despite the increasing severity of the U.S. laws regulating immigration, many people around the world still hope to immigrate to the United States. About 3.6 million foreigners were on waiting lists to enter the United States as legal immigrants in 1997."

[3] Refiérase a la nota explicativa de *Iracema* (113).

[4] Para mayor información sobre las etapas del nacionalismo brasileño, consúltese *The Brazilian Puzzle* (8).

[5] Según Anderson, "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation" (46). Para más información, véase *Imagined Communities*.

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Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa" and Júlio Dantas's *A Severa*: The Genesis of National Folklore in the Death of a *Mouraria Fadista*

Michael Colvin

Abstract: This article examines the genesis of the folkloric figure of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista* as a national icon in twentieth-century Portuguese popular culture. In his drama, *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos,* Júlio Dantas establishes a metaphoric correlation between Maria Severa, the Mouraria, the *fado* and Portugal, when his heroine dies in the arms of the *fado*, thus realizing the fate of all Portuguese (according to Dantas's protagonist, the Count of Marialva). Dantas's *mise-en-scène* of Severa's death is followed by the refrain from Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa," the last lines of the play. *Fado novo* lyricists from the 1930s to the 1970s recontextualize Sousa do Casacão's lyrics and Dantas's proposal of a folkloric Mouraria—the cradle of the national song—to elevate the urban song in the Portuguese collective conscience.

Since Teófilo Braga catalogued Sousa do Casacão's eulogy to Maria Severa, "O Fado da Severa" (1848), in the *Cancioneiro popular* (1867), the prostitute's legend has problematized the *fado*'s interpretation of its own history.[1] Pinto de Carvalho refers to Severa as: "inspiradora de um dos mais antigos fados, mas cuja biografia tem sido deturpada" (61). Pimentel adds: "se toda a gente falla ainda da Severa, é fóra de duvida que a geração de hoje em dia não tem sobre o assumpto senão uma vaga ida fugitiva, que apenas as cantigas do fado alimentam ainda" (140). But the *fado novo* of the mid-twentieth century does not merely continue a tradition begun by Sousa do Casacão's verses; rather, it elaborates on an isolated nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary fascination with the figure

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 491-505.
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of the Mouraria *fadista*. Before Júlio Dantas created Severa's popular incarnation, in his novel and drama, *A Severa*, (1900, 1901) the *fadista* had been mentioned in Camilo Castelo Branco's *Noites de insónia* (1874) and *Eusébio Macário* (1879).[2] Luís Augusto Palmeirim's interview with Severa at her apartment in the Bairro Alto, in *Os excêntricos do meu tempo* (1891) had traced sketches of the *fadista* that would serve as the foundations for her specious biographies.[3] Eça de Queiroz's ambivalence towards the Mouraria *fadistas* of the nineteenth century had surfaced in his essays and fiction as well.[4] Dantas's *A Severa*, however, has altered twentieth-century Portuguese popular culture's image of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista* by identifying Maria Severa as an emblem of both the Mouraria and Portugal, and thus cultivating a sympathetic relationship between the Nation and the degraded quarter of Lisbon.

In this article, I shall study the impact of Júlio Dantas's portrayal of the life and death of Maria Severa on the twentieth century's folkloric memory of the nineteenth-century Mouraria. I shall demonstrate that Dantas's literary figure is really a composite sketch that reproduces biographical information of Severa's contemporaries. However, because of the diffusion of Dantas's *A Severa*, in musical-theatre (1909) and cinematic adaptations (1931); and because the inception of Portuguese radio in the 1930s coincided with the success of Dantas's "Novo Fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)" (1931), Dantas's Severa has become Portugal's Severa, and, consequently, Dantas's Mouraria is Portugal's Mouraria. Furthermore, Dantas's *mise-en-scène* of Severa's agony, in the presence of the *fado* and the consequent spontaneous chorus of Mouraria *fadistas*' singing Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa," has promoted the *fado*'s association as the national song: "Chorem, chorem os fadistas / E chore toda a nação / Morreu a Severa, a flor / Da Rua do Capelão!"[5] As a result, *fado novo* lyricists from the 1930s to the 1970s have elevated the urban song in the national psyche by recycling Dantas's dramatization/novelization of Severa's life and death as relevant to Portuguese life outside of Lisbon. Further, Sousa do Casacão's refrain from the "Fado da Severa" is recontextualized in the *fado novo* to draw the nation's attention to the imminent death of the *fado*, or rather, the death of Portugal's national song, in the modernization of Lisbon's Mouraria.

The dissemination of Dantas's Severa has problematized critics' understanding of the *fadista's* biography throughout the twentieth century. Pinto de Carvalho remarks: "nós mesmos confiamos demasiadamente na lenda chula, que se adensou em volta do nome desta tronga de viela, lenda elaborada pela fantasia popular e pela cumplicidade dos literatos" (61). Pimentel notes that

"através do confuso nevoeiro da versão oral," Dantas traces sketches of Severa and the Count of Vimioso "empallidecidos pela acção do tempo" (141). And as late as 1994, Sucena notes: "Deve-se a Júlio Dantas a divulgação, embora romantizada, dessa singular figura feminina, cujo nome ficou para sempre ligado ao fado, de que se tornou uma autêntica lenda" (22).

Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho gloss what they consider Dantas's artistic distortions by referring their readers to Severa's contemporaries: Palmeirim and Queriol. Pinto de Carvalho vows to "tirar a limpo a vida desta meio-soprano dos conservatórios do vício" (62). In a similar tone, Pimentel declares: "a lenda é boa; mas a história é melhor" (156). Sucena confirms that even within *fadista* circles, many believed that Severa was a figment of Dantas's imagination (22). And the *fado* "Maria Severa" asks us of the late *fadista*: "Sabem quem era? / Talvez ninguém."[6] But is the demand to disaccredit Dantas's picturesque Severa warranted? To what extent is Dantas's Maria Severa a fictional creation? In 1938, Norberto de Araújo maintains that whether Dantas exaggerated the *fadista*'s celebrity, certainly Severa: "foi 'alguém' no seu tempo, no tempo do Bairro Alto e da Mouraria turbulentos, fadistas, pitorescos," but that Lisbon's popular quarters of the mid-nineteenth century "dariam 'águas fortes' de preferência a ingénuas aguarelas" (*Peregrinações* 70).

Despite Pinto de Carvalho's *amende honorable* and Pimentel's proposal to put aside the *fadista*'s legend, these authors ignore that some of Dantas's theatrical and novelistic embellishments of a few years earlier coincide with the biographies of Severa in *História do fado* and *A triste canção do sul* (Pinto de Carvalho 61; Pimentel 144). Dantas's recounting of Severa's life can be traced to the same sources that Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho deem as the dependable foundation of their histories; Dantas's characterization of the *fadista* synthesizes the inconclusivness of the oral tradition and Palmeirim's and Queriol's biographical accounts.[7] Dantas's ambivalent portrait of Severa—at times a silver-tongued virago, at times timid and gracious—constitutes a composite sketch of the conflicting reports of Severa's interviewers.[8] In their criticism of Severa's literary avatars, Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel overlook Dantas's piecing together fragments of Severa's contemporaries' testimony to present an objective vision, however idealized, of the singer. Dantas did not exaggerate Severa's portrait; rather, he filled in the gaps of the scant biographical data on the *fadista* to create the folkloric figure of the Mouraria *fadista*/prostitute.

Later characterizations of the nineteenth-century *fadista* return us to Dantas's dramatic and novelesque Severas. Already by 1910 we observe the plausible

impact of André Brim's contemporary operetta adaptation of Dantas's *A Severa* (1909) on José Malhoa's painting, *O fado* (1910).[9] The coincidence between Malhoa's and Dantas's representations of the *fadista*/prostitute has provoked misinterpretations of the artist's subject, Adelaide da Facada, as Severa.[10] The *Mouraria fado* "Cinco Quinas" alludes that Severa's Mouraria is the background for the painting: "Mouraria mãe do fado / Que Malhoa quis pintar / Triste canção que nasceu / Para sofrer a cantar."[11] "Fado Malhoa" identifies Severa as the feminine figure in *O fado*: "Dali vos digo que eu ouvi / A voz que se esmera / Boçal dum faia banal / Cantando à Severa."[12] Adelaide da Facada has been confused with Severa in twentieth-century political cartoons that parody Malhoa's painting.[13] And Amália Rodrigues's role as Severa in the 1955 stage production of Dantas's play resembles her portrayal of Adelaide da Facada, as she sings "Fado Malhoa" from within the 1910 painting, in Augusto Fraga's 1947 video-clip.[14]

But the coincidence between Malhoa's rendering of Adelaide da Facada and Dantas's descriptions of Severa is not due solely to the creativity of the author. We observe similarities between Malhoa's prostitute and Palmeirim's Severa: "Estava ella fumando, recostada n'um canapé de palhinha, com chinellas de polimento ponteados" (288). And Palmeirim's details of Severa's bedroom are mimicked in Malhoa's painting: "pendente da parede (sacrilegio vulgar nas casas d'aquella ordem) uma pessima gravura, representando o Senhor dos Passos da Graça" (288). We might say that Dantas turned Palmeirim's anecdote into literary folklore and Malhoa tailored it to the plastic arts.

If *A Severa* determined for the twentieth century the folkloric image of the nineteenth-century Mouraria *fadista*, Dantas's theatrical and novelesque setting of Rua do Capelão served as a precedent for Portuguese popular culture's treatment of the Mouraria. The novelty of Leitão de Barros's filmic adaptation of *A Severa* (1931) thus would make Dantas's Mouraria Portugal's Mouraria. That is, Portugal saw the Mouraria for the first time through Dantas's eyes and Leitão de Barros's lens.[15]

As *A Severa* was Portugal's first talkie, it made an aesthetic impact on Portuguese film during the 1930s through the 1950s. The Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional profited from Leitão de Barros's and Dantas's images of the Mouraria of "faias e boleeiros, dos fidalgos e 'severas,'" and promoted similar, yet ingenuine images of the quarter in Portuguese movies, despite that by 1943, all that remained of that Mouraria were "ecos de anedotas, perspectivas, quadrinhos, águas fortes, aguarelas de fundo branco, algumas pinceladas lúgubres" (Araújo, *Legendas* 133).[16]

The popularity of Dantas's 1931 song, "Novo Fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)," coincided with the launching of Portugal's first radio station, Rádio Colonial.[17] Thus the Mouraria's "Rua Suja"—as Capelão was known in the nineteenth century—became a relevant street for a national audience, as Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's quaint portrayal of the Mouraria of the 1820s to the 1840s was presented to the Portuguese as an urban reality. Already in 1938, Norberto de Araújo demonstrates the association between the Mouraria and Dantas's Severa, in his lamentation: "O fado que [Maria Severa] sabia chorar com a alma na voz—chorou-a por sua vez. Não a choremos nós, evoquemo-la, visto que nos encontramos na Mouraria" (*Peregrinações* 70).

In his recontextualizion of the twentieth-century Mouraria in the Romantic memory of the early nineteenth, Dantas forges a metaphoric relationship between the Mouraria, Severa and the *fado*. Because Dantas's vision of the nineteenth-century Mouraria is the nation's first image of the quarter, presented as massive popular culture, *A Severa* guarantees automatic national identification between the Mouraria and the *fadista*. Severa declares to the gypsy Romão: "A Mouraria não é aqui nem ali [...]. É onde eu estiver! Para onde eu fôr, vai agarrada a mim. A Mouraria sou eu!" (*A Severa* 70). Dantas complicates his metaphor when Severa claims: "O fado, sou eu!" (70). By proposing Severa as the personification of both the Mouraria and the *fado*, Dantas facilitates a passive national curiosity of the theretofore deplorable Lisbon quarter; national sympathy towards the remarkable singer connotes a consequent sympathy towards the Mouraria and the *fado*.

Once Dantas has convinced his audience of the association between Severa, the Mouraria and the *fado*, he establishes a relationship between the *fado* and the Portuguese national character. In Dantas's drama, a teary Count of Marialva hands Severa a *guitarra* and declares: "É destino de Portugal morrer abraçado ao fado!" (110).[18] In Leitão de Barros's film, Severa echoes Marialva's lines in verse: "Tenho o destino marcado / Desde a hora em que te vi / Ó meu cigano adorado / Viver abraçada ao fado / Morrer abraçada a ti."[19] Dantas's formula concludes that if Severa is the Mouraria, if she is the *fado*, and if she shares Portugal's fate to die in the *fado*'s arms, then she also must be Portugal. Thus, Dantas's characterization of Severa exceeds the local boundaries of the Mouraria and the unfortunate consequences of the *fadista*'s life to propose the singing prostitute as an emblem of the Portuguese people. In his proposal, Dantas, perhaps unwittingly, cultivates a sympathetic relationship between the nation and the Mouraria; the *fado novo*'s lyricists profit seemingly from Dantas's metaphor.[20]

But, why does the *fado novo* appropriate Dantas's literary fantasy to understand its own history? The *fado*'s status as a national expression, while popularly accepted, was met with intellectual protest. In 1909, António Arroio writes:

> O Fado para mim exprime o estado da inércia e de inferioridade sentimental em que o nosso país está mergulhado há muitos anos e do qual urge que saia. Portugal é positivamente um doente moral e o Fado basta para se formar o diagnóstico da doença. (58)

Arroio believes that as long as the Portuguese sing the *fado* "de cigarro ao canto da boca, olhos em alvo e paixão a arrebentar o peito" they will remain an inferior people, unable to understand the modernity of civilized nations (58). For aesthetic reasons, in 1929, Afonso Lopes Vieira opposes the *fado* as a Portuguese anthem:

> De modo algum considero o "Fado" a canção nacional. Apenas a canção de Lisboa, torpe mas muitas vezes pungente. A nação que adoptasse como seu hino poético toada semelhante estaria em verdade perdida. O "Fado" é a lastimosa glória de Lisboa—uma vergonha lírica. (352)

The *fado novo* tries to overcome the critical schism concerning the *fado*'s value for a Portuguese society by demonstrating that the song has an universal audience. The *fado choradinho* that characterized the poor urban *fadista* class, the plangent song that Luís Moita would call the "canção dos vencidos," recedes as the *fado novo* appeals to Dantas's benign romanticization of the degraded nineteenth-century Mouraria. The lyricists exploit three stages in Dantas's fictionalization of Severa's life in their attempt to link Severa's Mouraria and the *fado* to the Portuguese character, in order to vindicate the song in the Portuguese collective conscience. Some verses of the *fado novo* of the 1930s to 1970s attribute the origins of the *fado* to the union between the disparate classes of the *fidalgo* and the prostitute. Others support the *fado*'s candidacy for national song by marginalizing the deplored *fado choradinho* to the poor urban quarters, by signaling the dissolution of the relationship between Severa and the Count as the birth of the Mouraria *fado*. Yet, still others link Severa's death to the death of the *fado* by recontextualizing Sousa do Casacão's "Novo Fado da Severa" for an audience growing alien to the *fado* during Lisbon's inevitable modernization.

Many *fados* of the twentieth century refer to Dantas's interpretation of the

romance between Severa and the Count of Vimioso/Marialva to appeal to a national audience by defending the *fado* as good taste, thus reinvigorating Avelino de Sousa's 1912 support of the *fado* as the national song: "Que importa que o rufião ou a meretriz estropeiem o Fado? Isso que prova? Simplesmente que essa bela trova está na alma popular, e que, justamente porque é cantada do mais baixo ao mais alto da escala social, é que tem foros de canção nacional (42)."[21] By reiterating the social disparity of Dantas's literary lovers, the *fado* indicates its universal appeal in an attempt to promote its identity as the national song.

"Ah, Fado dum Ladrão" alludes to the nineteenth-century *fidalgos*' predilection for the Mouraria prostitutes: "Todos dizem mal do fado / Mas dizer mal foi sempre moda / pois ele já é cantado / por gente de alta roda."[22] The song reminds the *fado*'s detractors of the noblemen who visited the Mouraria to hear Severa: "Noutro tempo a fidalguia / Dava-se ao luxo ditoso era / De passar na Mouraria / As noites com a Severa."[23] It also suggests an inherent Portuguese aesthetics of the *fado*: "Ouvir dizer mal do que é nosso / Não é um bom português." In a similar manner, "Anda Comigo" is an apology of the *fado* as a Portuguese tradition that pervades all classes.[24] A *fadista* invites a friend to visit the Mouraria to hear *fado*. "Anda comigo / Porque vais gostar deveras." The singer reminds his guest of the custom of the nobility's mingling with the lower classes, giving the example of Dantas's characters: "Por aqui também andaram / Marialvas e Severas"; he suggests that they continue the tradition: "Veste a samara / Põe o teu chapéu de lado / Traz contigo uma guitarra / E vamos cantar o fado"; and at last reflects on their own perpetuation of not only urban, but also national folklore: "Depois dirás mais uma vez / Como isto é bom e português."

While many *fados* view the birth of the national song as the fruit of an union between *fidalgo* and prostitute, "Tia Macheta" attributes the origins of the sad Mouraria *fado* to the dissolution of that very relationship.[25] The sentimental *fado choradinho* of the degraded Mouraria that Lopes Vieira and Arroio reject as a mere urban expression ill-suited for national heritage, is relegated to the status of Lisbon's song: a song that does not appeal to all classes nor to all regions. By exiling the Mouraria *fado* from the canons of national songs, "Tia Macheta"'s lyrics support the *fado castiço* as a national expression. In the *fado*, Severa seeks counsel from Dantas's novelesque clairvoyant go-between, when the Count has disappeared: "O amante não aparecera / A triste Severa sempre fiel / Chamou a Tia Macheta / Velha alcoveta p'ra saber

dele."[26] Tia Macheta reads Severa's cards: "A velha pegou nas cartas / Sebentas fartas de mãos tão sujas / E antes de as embaralhar / Pôs-se a grasnar como as corujas"; and Macheta's hand reveals Severa's fate: "Ele não vem minha filha / Tirou a espadilha de maus agoiros"; and implies that the Count has abandoned Severa for a noble woman: "Há também uma viagem / Uma personagem e a dama doiros."[27] Severa waits for the Count until morning. When he does not return, the sad *fado* of the Mouraria is born: "O fidalgo não voltou / Severa esperou até ser dia / E desde essa noite / Aqui existe / O fado triste da Mouraria."

"Tia Macheta's" context remits us to a scene in Dantas's play, which in turn reiterates the *fado novo*'s and Avelino de Sousa's discourse concerning the national song: its appeal to all classes in Portuguese society. When the Count of Marialva locks Severa in his apartment so that she cannot associate with the *fadistas* of Bairro Alto and Mouraria, he appropriates the *fado* for the aristocracy by stealing it from the poor. By imprisoning the *fadista*, and allowing her to sing only with piano in salons, Marialva attempts to elevate the *fado* as an elite song. But, the Mouraria *fado* is, as Palmeirim narrates: "Um 'hymno nacional' [...]. Para o fadista, cidadão dos bairros infamados, *habitué* das espeluncas e dos bordeis, todo o paiz se resume n'esse mundo, que é o seu, a 'sua pátria,' o seu *habitat*" (86). Severa escapes through a window by jumping into a passing laundry wagon. She narrates to Timpanas: "O Conde tinha-me fechado em casa, num segundo andar. Não me pude ter! Cheguei à janela, passava a carroça duma lavadeira, atirei-me p'ra cima das troixas!" (148). Pinto de Carvalho attributes Severa's fleeing to the *fadista*'s boredom and nostalgia for the milieu of the *faia* (78-79). Pimentel suggests that Severa feared that the Count of Vimioso would lose interest in the affair: "Antes 'sardinha' toda a vida do que 'foie gras' uma hora" (155).[28] I believe that both arguments serve Dantas's propagandistic designs on the *fado* as a national song. Pimentel notes: "[O fadista] lisonjeia-se de que as classes superiores da sociedade executem o Fado no piano, em sumptuosas salas; como um estrangeiro se póde lisonjear de ouvir o hymno da sua nação, apreciado n'uma terra que não é a d'elle" (87-88). Besides being a prisoner of the Count, Severa was an exile in a foreign land; Severa did not want to sing only for the elite, but for the variety of classes that constituted her audience in the Bairro Alto and Mouraria. In Dantas's play, Severa confronts Marialva:

> E daí, prisões não me servem! Quero o sol, a gandaia, andar na rala, um dia tudo, outro dia nada, ser livre como o vento, gastar o riso e as chinelas, chamar meu a

> todo o mundo, não ter rei nem roque, e mostrar ao sol de moinar de rua em rua, o meu lenço encarnado e a minha liberdade! Se me queres assim, muito bem; se me não queres, é graça! Oiro há muito; Severas há uma só. (157)[29]

In the following act, after Severa has not seen Marialva, she reads her own cards. Her fortune reveals that the count will return (174-79). The *fado* "Tia Macheta," Severa's biography and Dantas's novel, however, concur that the Count and the *fadista* do not reunite.

Nevertheless, Dantas's dramatic Count returns. And his heroine dies beside him as she sings: "Fui desgraçada no mundo / Desde que a saia vesti [...]/ Eu quero morrer cantando / Já que chorando nasci" (196).[30] Thus the theatrical Severa realizes Portugal's destiny to die embracing the *fado* (110). Within the context of the four-act play, Severa's fatal collapse while singing the national song is significant. The *fadista* is transformed through her agony. She is no longer a miserable prostitute on Rua do Capelão, nor is she a mere emblem of the Mouraria, or even Lisbon; rather, Severa reenacts the death of all Portuguese in her final *fado*: a national song.

We have noted that Teófilo Braga's publication of Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa" has played a crucial role in the diffusion of the legend of the Mouraria *fadista*. The lyricists of the 1930s to 1970s reinterpret Sousa do Casacão's lament of Severa's death as the death of the Mouraria as the quarter yields to Lisbon's modernization, and as a new generation moves away from the *fado*.[31] Thus, Severa's death is the death of the Mouraria, and the consequent death of the *fado*. In its reiteration of Dantas's proposal of Severa as an emblem of the *fado* and the Mouraria, the *fado novo* announces the death of the national song and the destruction of the cradle of the national song. As a consequence, the destiny of the Portuguese to die in the arms of the *fado* is made impossible by the progressive extinction of the song, as a result of the architectural death of the Mouraria and the changing values of the Portuguese who shun the *fado* as an outdated genre.

The *fado novo* criticizes the ahistorical venture of urban modernization by calling the public's attention to the destruction of the *fado*'s patrimony. What might appear to be a cause relevant to residents of the Mouraria or perhaps to architectural conservationists in Lisbon becomes relevant to a nation, thanks to the *fado* and to Dantas's cultivation of an inextricable correlation between the national song and the endangered quarter. Sousa do Casacão's lyrics, which serve to announce Severa's death in Dantas's play and

novel, constitute a criticism of the Estado Novo and the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa in the *fado novo* of the 1930s to 1970s.[32] The *novo-fadista* does not bemoan simply the death of a singer, but rather the death of the national song as a consequence of the death of the Mouraria.

A 1952 cartoon entitled "Fado da Demolição" depicts a crying nineteenth-century *fadista* who wanders through the rubble of the twentieth-century Baixa Mouraria, as he sings to the tune of the "Fado da Severa": "Chorai, fadistas, chorai / Que a Mouraria lá vai / E está quase no 'squeleto / Apesar da tradição / É bairro sem Salvação / Com o Salvação Barreto."[33] As Lisbon tradition cedes to the Estado Novo's imminent modernization, the *fado novo* reestablishes its folkloric link to Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's Mouraria. The *fado novo*, thus, expresses its protest to the Mouraria's demolition in Manichaean terms; Severa's Mouraria represents the *fado*'s Golden Age and modernization proposes to eradicate all architectural vestiges of the *fado*'s heritage. The envisioned new Mouraria is a sterile shell of Severa's Mouraria, devoid of tradition and alien to the *fado*.

"Anda o Fado n'Outras Bocas" borrows the refrain of Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa" ("Chorai, fadistas, chorai / Como dizia a cantiga") to lament that, while the *fado* appears to be alive, it has been distorted by a generation that does not understand Severa's Mouraria: "Cantai, fadistas, cantai / Com vossas gargantas roucas / Que anda o fado n'outras bocas / Que não são bocas p'ró fado."[34] The lyrics conclude that without the Mouraria, the *fado* will soon be extinct. In a similar manner, the *fado* "Maria Severa" remarks on the absence of tradition in the endangered Mouraria, by posing the question of what will become of the orphaned *fado*: "Que vai ser desse enjeitado / Se perdeu o maior bem / O amor de mãe." Or, rather, what will happen to the *fado* when the Mouraria has disappeared? And the singer resigns to accept her role as part of the last generation of Mouraria *fadistas*, by alluding to Sousa do Casacão's *fado* in her refrain: "Fadistas chorai / Porque ela morreu."

In a concert in Boston, Mouraria *fadista* Mariza alluded to the legend of Maria Severa as an introduction to her version of Gabriel de Oliveira's "Há Festa na Mouraria."[35] In a shy, yet coquettish gesture, Mariza lifted the hem of her skirt to her knee to reveal black and white striped stockings identical to those worn by Dina Teresa in her role as Severa in Leitão de Barros's film, *A Severa*. More than a century after Dantas created his folkloric avatar of the Mouraria *fadista*, and over a century and a half after Sousa do Casacão recorded in verse the impact of Severa's death, the memory of the nineteenth-

century Mouraria *fadista* persists for Portuguese popular culture, so much so that it is being exported to Massachusetts Luso-American audiences of the twenty-first century. "Fadistas chorai / porque ela morreu"?

Notes

[1] Palmeirim comments: "[A celebridade da Severa] depois logrou a consagração do livro, no fado em que se lastima a sua morte, e o sr. Theóphilo Braga recolheu no seu *Cancioneiro Popular*, na secção destinada a perpetuar pela impressão os "Fados e canções das ruas" (285-86). Palmeirim believed that the popularity of the "Fado da Severa" was due to the anonymity of its author: "Quem foi o poeta anomymo que deu fórma ao sentimento popular? Ignora-se e foi de certo do mysterio que nasceu a sua popularidade" (287). Pimentel attributes the lyrics of the "Fado da Severa" to Sales Patuscão (61-2). Pinto de Carvalho identifies Sousa do Casacão (João José de Sousa) as the *fado*'s author (78, 100). Sucena details the discrepancy between the three authors, but later calls Sales Patuscão "presumível autor do 'Fado da Severa'" (33, 58). António Manuel Morais cites Sousa do Casacão as the "Fado da Severa"'s author. We learn from Sucena that Sales Patuscão and Sousa do Casacão were the most distinguished *fado* lyricists during Severa's lifetime (58). Teófilo Braga reproduces the Coimbra version of the "Fado da Severa" in his anthology. Variations on the "Fado da Severa" appear in César das Neves's and Gualdino Campos's *Cancioneiro de músicas populares* and Júlio de Castilho's *Lisboa antiga: Bairros orientais*. Pimentel and Pinto de Carvalho add more recent verses from the contemporary oral tradition.

[2] While Pimentel blames the "Fado da Severa" for the cult of the Mouraria *fadista*, he recognizes Camilo Castelo Branco's contribution to Severa's legend.

[3] Pinto de Carvalho believed that Severa had lived on Travessa do Poço da Cidade in 1844 or 1845 (62).

[4] Eça de Queiroz mentions the *fado* in *Os Maias* (1888) (400, 402, 507, 531, 575, 650-51, 697) and *A Ilustre Casa dos Ramires* (1894) (57, 255-56, 288). We may contrast the opinion of Eça's character, Ega, that there is nothing, in art, as beautiful as the *fado*, "nossa grande criação nacional," with Eça's most famous pronouncement on the Mouraria *fado*: "Atenas produziu a escultura, Roma fez o direito, Paris inventou a revolução, a Alemanha achou o misticismo. Lisboa que criou? O Fado [...]. Fatum era um Deus no Olimpo; nestes bairros é uma comédia. Tem uma orquestra de guitarras e uma iluminação de cigarros. Está mobilada com uma enxerga. A cena final é no hospital e na enxovia. O pano do fundo é uma mortalha" (*Os Maias* 650; "Lisboa" 1).

[5] Pinto de Carvalho collected these verses from oral tradition (104).

[6] "Maria Severa": José Galhardo/Raul Ferrão.

[7] Queriol's article appeared in *O popular* in April 1901 shortly after the 25 January 1901 debut of *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos*, as a vindication of the Count of Vimioso's character. Raimundo António Bulhão de Pato, also a contemporary of Severa, responded that same year to support Queriol's apology of the Count. Queriol's portrait confirms some of the gentler characteristics of Dantas's Severa.

[8] When Palmeirim visits Severa in the Bairro Alto he calls her a woman who lacked "dois dos principaes predicados femininos—a modestia e a timidez" (292). When Queriol meets Severa at the Count of Vimioso's Palace in Campo Grande, he characterizes the *fadista* as "serviçal e não com pretensões a dona de casa." He attributes Severa's shyness to her discomfort among nobility (1).

[9] André Brim adapted Dantas's novel and play as an operetta, with music by Filipe Duarte,

in 1909. In the late 1920s and 1930s, Dantas's play, *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos*, appeared in other parts of Europe. It had been translated to Catalan by Ribera y Rovira, and later appeared in Spanish, at the Teatro Roméa, in Barcelona (translated by José Palacios and Eugenio López Aydillo). Louise Ey translated the drama into German in 1920. *A Severa* was adapted to Spanish musical theatre by Francisco Romero and Guillermo Fernández Shaw, with music by Rafael Millán. After having appeared at the Teatro Apolo, in Madrid, the musical adaptation appeared at the Coliseu de Lisboa, in 1931 (*A Severa: Peça em quatro actos* 7-8).

[10] Malhoa's painting was exhibited for the first time at the Sociedade de Belas Artes, in 1917 (Sucena 359-60). *O fado* is on display at the Museu da Cidade in Campo Grande.

[11] "Cinco Quinas": Fernando Farinha.

[12] "Fado Malhoa": José Galhardo/Frederico Valério. "Fado Malhoa" profits from Dantas's proposal of the *fado* as the national song in its verse: "Pintou numa tela com arte e com vida / A trova mais bela da terra mais querida"; and again in the verse: "Subiu a um quarto onde viu / À luz de petróleo / E fez o mais português / Dos quadros a óleo."

[13] In Pinto de Magalhães's cartoon entitled "Um Desastre. 'A Severa' [...] Já Morreu," (*A paródia* 25 June 1931), Maria Severa is wearing the same skirt that Adelaide da Facada wears in Malhoa's painting. Francisco Valença's caricature "O Legado José Malhôa," (*Sempre fixe*, 24 July 1941) satirizes the painting *O fado* through a parody of the lyrics of Sousa do Casacão's "Fado da Severa." And Stuart Carvalhais's "No Centenário de Mestre Malhoa" (*Os ridículos*, 14 May 1955) reads: "Maria em Situação Severa tem tido sempre no 'Zé Fadista' um grande acompanhador!"

[14] Ângela Pinto debuted in the role of Maria Severa in 1901 at the Teatro D. Amélia. The performances of *A Severa: Peça em quatro actos* starring Amália Rodrigues (Teatro Monumental 1955) and Lena Coelho (Teatro Maria Matos 1990) perpetuated Dantas's image of the Mouraria, well into the last years of the twentieth century. Augusto Fraga directed a series of short films based on Amália's *fados*, including "Fado Malhoa" in Madrid in the summer of 1947. The video-clip appeared with feature films in Portuguese movie theaters in 1948 and 1949 (Pavão dos Santos 292; 296). The video-clip appears in RTP's 1995 documentary, "Amália: Uma Estranha Forma de Vida," based on Vítor Pavão dos Santos's interviews with the twentieth-century *fadista*.

[15] Jorge Cid's cartoon, "1901-1932" (*Guitarra de Portugal*, 10 February 1932) signals the impact of Dantas's *A Severa* and Leitão de Barros's *A Severa* on two generations: "Os trajes no carnaval de 1901 [...] sofreram a influência da peça 'A Severa', que então subiu à cena. Também o carnaval de 1932 vem sofrendo a influência da mesma obra, agora filmada, segundo temos constatado com a aproximação da quadra carnavalesca."

[16] The *fado* accompanied mainstream Portuguese cinema of the 1930s-50s. Portuguese film featured *fadistas* turned actors who often played *fadistas*. And as the decadent Mouraria and Alfama were the obvious loci in movies such as *A canção de Lisboa* (1933), *O pátio das cantigas* (1942), *Costa do Castelo* (1943) and *Fado, história d'uma cantadeira* (1947), the directors (re) constructed the popular neighborhoods in a picturesque form.

[17] Dina Teresa Moreira sang the "Novo fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)" (Júlio Dantas/Frederico de Freitas) in Leitão de Barros's film. Sucena attributes the 1930s launching of Rádio Colonial with having brought the *fado* to a national audience (213-14).

[18] In 1900, when Júlio Dantas was preparing his stage production of *A Severa* for its debut at Teatro D. Amélia (S. Luís), Hintze Ribeiro, acting on behalf of the Count of Vimioso's family, asked the author to omit the nobleman's character from the play. Dantas gave the character the apocryphal name of the Count of Marialva (Sucena 23; Morais 169-70).

[19] "Novo fado da Severa (Rua do Capelão)": Júlio Dantas/Frederico de Freitas.

[20] António Porto accuses the Estado Novo of having cultivated a national curiosity surrounding the *fado* as a means to centralize the nation in Lisbon, thus to avoid northern resistance to the regime: "A burocracia lisboeta, para destruir uma certa resistência ao regime e ao centralismo,

por parte dos nortenhos, fazia ir para o ar, através da rádio e da televisão, doses maciças de *fados lisboetas* e as coisas chegaram ao ponto de se considerar, mesmo no Porto, que não se era português se não se fosse, pelo menos uma vez na vida, não a Meca mas à Mouraria ou a Alfama, ouvir uma sessão de 'fadinho' muito choradinho, como convinha às desgraças nacionais, começadas em Alcácer Quibir, onde segundo alguns foram encontradas 10 mil guitarras, depois da trágica derrota" (13; Sucena 354). Porto ignores the fact that the *fado* had earned the reputation, however controversial, of national song before the existence of the Estado Novo.

[21] Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel disagree about Severa's relationship with the Count of Vimioso. Pimentel does not believe that the Count was in love with Severa: "não se deixou arrastar nunca por uma paixão delirante e degradante. Nunca deixou de ser um fidalgo, um gentilhomem; nunca enloqueceu por amor da Severa. Foi na primeira sociedade, um bohemio, mas não perdeu nunca a sua linha aristocratica" (154). Pinto de Carvalho, however, concurs with Dantas's portrayal of the relationship between the *fadista* and the Count: "o aristocrata não teve um simples capricho epidérmico por essa franduna salaz, por esse ouropel fanado que se atirava para os bastidores depois do espectáculo. Gostou deveras dos seus beijos, que se desviavam em colar e que eram como que um prelúdio de guitarra para os acordes ferozes dos abraços" (79).

[22] "Ah, Fado dum Ladrão": Oscar Gusmão Martins/Carlos dos Santos.

[23] In Dantas's novel, after having attended an opera at the Dona Amélia Theater, the Count of Marialva and his friends go to the Bairro Alto to hear Severa sing.

[24] "Anda Comigo": João Nobre.

[25] "Tia Macheta": Manuel Soares/Linhares Barboso.

[26] Dantas's Macheta advises Severa's mother (Cesária/Barbuda), arranges a deacon as her paramour and intervenes to help keep young Severa in boarding-school at the Coleginho. Dantas's Cesária/Barbuda is based loosely on Severa's mother, Ana Maria Gertrudes Honofriana, and the late nineteenth-century *fadista*, Cesária (a Mulher da Alcântara). Dantas's Barbuda arrives in the Mouraria, fleeing from a gypsy caravan, in the Alentejo. Pinto de Carvalho, Alberto Pimentel and Miguel Queriol refute Severa's gypsy heritage; Norberto de Araújo, perhaps influenced by Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's creations, believed that Severa had come to Lisbon with a horde of gypsies (Pinto de Carvalho 62; Pimentel 143; Queriol 1; *Peregrinações* 70). Because A Barbuda—so called because she was rumored to have whiskers—lived in a tavern on Rua da Madragoa (officially Rua Vicente Borga in 1863), in 1820, she was probably a *varina*. Dantas's Cesária (Barbuda) does not love Severa; however, she is compelled by a maternal instinct to protect her daughter, especially from her likely fate: prostitution. When Dantas's Severa discovers the *fado* and subsequently loses her virginity, Cesária is devastated. Pimentel, however, believed that Barbuda lacked maternal compassion and that it was she who prostituted Severa (142). When Severa is an adult, Macheta brings Barbuda the news that her daughter is the Count of Marialva's lover. And, toward the end of the novel, Macheta advises Severa, after she has rejected the Count.

[27] Here, the *fado* alludes to Dantas's delicate novelesque character of the Marquesa de Ceide, whom the Count of Marialva rebuffs in favor of Severa.

[28] Both Pinto de Carvalho and Pimentel believe that Dantas's scene of Severa's flight in a laundry wagon is based on a true story. Dantas may have written the episode of Severa's escape based on Pimentel's article from the *Diário de notícias* (12 June 1893), based on stories that he had gathered from the oral tradition. Pimentel reproduces the article, in his book, in which he narrates the search for Severa. One of the Count of Vimioso's friends found her in a tavern on Rua dos Inglesinhos, in the Bairro Alto, playing the guitar and surrounded by an audience. The Count's friend peeked into the tavern and sang: "Todos aquelles que são / Da nossa sucia effectiva / Lamentam a fugitiva / Da Rua do Capellão." Pimentel continues: "A Severa levantou, contrariada, a cabeça, tendo conhecido aquella voz. Estava apanhada, fôra descoberta, pareceu-lhe que perdia a liberdade n'aquella hora" (155-56).

[29] In Dantas's novel, Severa delivers a similar speech to Tia Macheta, in which she explains her motives for having left the Count: "Se eu quisesse tornava. Mas não quero. Não posso! Não estou decidida a fazer a ninguém o sacrifício da minha liberdade. Quero o sol, a independência, ser senhora dos meus passos, sem prisões de ninguém, sem dever favores, livre como o vento, poder ter coração para quem eu quiser, rir e chorar à minha vontade. Porque a vida é isso! Ah! Mas como eu gosto dele, tia Macheta!" (292).

[30] In Dantas's drama Severa collapses between Custódia and Marialva (196). In the novel, Custódia brings the news of Severa's death to the Count (301). Colvin comments that Pimentel and Araújo believe that the *fadista* died of indigestion, but that Pinto de Carvalho believes that she died in a hospital bed of complications related to syphilis. According to Severa's burial record, she died at 9:00 p.m. on 30 Nov. 1846. Her death certificate, issued 16 Nov. 1848, lists apoplexy as the cause of death (141n27).

[31] See Colvin, "Gabriel de Oliveira's 'Há Festa na Mouraria' and the *Fado Novo*'s Criticism of the Estado Novo's Demolition of the Baixa Mouraria" for more on the allusion to Severa's death as the death of the Mouraria in the Salvação Barreto urban rehabilitation projects, between the 1930s and 1970s (138-42).

[32] Sousa do Casacão's lyrics: "Chorai, fadistas chorai / Que a Severa já morreu [...]" are the last lines of Dantas's play and novel, as the mourning *fadistas* of the Mouraria break into a spontaneous chorus (200; 303). Dantas, however, must resort to ellipsis, to avoid anachronism, as the previous lines of the "Fado da Severa" would read: "Hoje mesmo faz um ano / Que a Severa faleceu."

[33] Eduardo Faria "Fado da Demolição," *Os ridículos*, 17 May 1952. See Colvin and Macedo de Sousa for a contextualization of this cartoon among others that denounce the Salvação Barreto program between the 1940s and 1960s (Colvin 136-37; Macedo de Sousa 48).

[34] "Anda o Fado n'Outras Bocas": Artur Ribeiro. Variations on "Fado loucura" (Júlio de Sousa/Frederico de Brito) have echoed Sousa do Casacão's refrain from the "Fado da Severa": "Chorai, chorai, guitarras da minha terra / O vosso pranto encerra / A minha vida amargurada / E se é loucura / Amar-te desta maneira / Quer eu queira / Quer não queira / Não posso amar-te calada"; "Chorai, chorai, poetas do meu país / Troncos da mesma raiz / Da vida que nos juntou / E se vocês / Não estivessem ao meu lado / Então não havia fado / Nem fadistas como eu sou." Pinto de Magalhães's cartoon "Um Destastre. 'A Severa' [...] Já Morreu," (*A paródia*, 25 June 1931) criticizes Dantas's and Leitão de Barros's distortion of Severa's biography. His drawing depicts Dantas's sitting on Severa's lap, playing a *guitarra*, while a nineteenth-century *fadista* covers his ears. The accompanying text—a criticsm of the 1931 film—recycles Sousa do Casacão's refrain: "Agora é que já pode cantar-se, com verdade, mesmo ao respeito da fita: chorai, fadistas chorai—que a Severa já morreu [...]. A tão pregoada fita, realizada em Paris, é tudo menos a Severa. Inferior como argumento, inferior como realização, inferior em tudo. A dois ou três escudos, em qualquer cinema barato, ainda se tolera. Com preços altos, não."

[35] Mariza sang at the Berklee Auditorium in Boston on 22 Oct. 2004.

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Delayed Enlightenment: Philosophy in Twentieth-Century Portugal

Carlos Leone

Abstract: This paper intends to present a panorama of the major trends in philosophy in twentieth-century Portugal to those unfamiliar with the subject and the language. It discusses both the authors and works most relevant and recent contemporary surveys of the topic by researchers, both in Portugal and abroad.

This paper is a short presentation from a doctoral dissertation on twentieth-century Portuguese criticism. Thus, much of what is presupposed here relates to a series of discussions concerning various segments of the social sciences and the humanities in contemporary Portugal. Philosophy, like most if not all of the social sciences and the humanities, remained at bay in Portugal's universities throughout most of the first half of the twentieth century and, in fact, that aspect of its existence greatly contributed to the definition of philosophy in Portugal as an element of modern critical discourse. In a global perspective, our view is that the modernization of Portuguese society, i.e., the creation of a public sphere, occurred only in the twentieth century, whereas in most of Western Europe it formed gradually between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (from, say, Erasmus to Benjamin Constant).

The greater part of the discontent of the Portuguese *intelligentsia* towards Portugal, its history and culture, derives from the uncomfortable perception of this backwardness, which belittled the country vis-à-vis its main cultural

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 507-14.
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model, Europe (and in particular France). Therefore, our analysis is embedded in some of the main aspects of Eduardo Lourenço's critique of Portuguese culture (some of Lourenço's essays have recently been translated into English under the titles, *Chaos and Splendor* and *This Little Lusitanian House*). But our focus is, unlike Lourenço's, not so much on the singularity of the Portuguese experience of philosophy as it is on the relation of the Portuguese integration of philosophy alongside the humanities and social sciences into the university system in the second half of the twentieth century.

It is striking how the collapse of the Portuguese monarchy in 1910 symbolizes a vast and intense surge of discussions related to Portugal's national identity that stretches from the 1820s (the beginning of a liberal political regime in Portugal) until 1974 (with the revolution of April 25th establishing the democratic order of today). In those early years of the twentieth century, all major trends of the Portuguese *intelligentsia* discussed with a remarkable vigor the status and prospects of the Portuguese nation. There are two decisive reasons for this: first, the ruling class empowered by the new Republican regime had asserted itself in 1890, when a British ultimatum to Portugal, in order to gain control of a stretch of Portuguese-controlled African land (then connecting Angola and Mozambique), aroused a massive patriotic feeling amongst college youth. Twenty years later, those young protesters were already speaking *ex cathedra*, leading newspapers, controlling political parties, and the 1910 revolution provided the perfect opportunity to recreate Portugal according to the progressive ideology they had sustained since the late nineteenth century.

Second, they were not alone. In fact, they were in power, unquestionably, but they were already obsolete. As early as 1915, all the major trends of a specifically twentieth-century generation of Portuguese *intelligentsia* were defined and active. All of them will present themselves by way of cutting ties with the old republican rhetoric: the *saudosistas* of Teixeira de Pascoaes, a poet and a mystic who will claim a uniqueness to Portuguese feelings and language, related to the word "saudade" ("to miss"), a supposedly distinct trait of the Portuguese character; the futurists, led by Sá-Carneiro and (despite himself) Fernando Pessoa, modernists who dreamt of a modern Europe in contradictory terms and who would soon disperse, with some of them ending up as fascists; the politicized *integralistas*, a conservative, oftentimes pro-monarchist, faction that greeted the pre-modern Catholic tradition of custom and power in Portugal as defining the country's identity; and, last but not least, those who established in Portugal the modern sense (in Constant's terms) of liberties,

whom we shall call "critics" (in the 1920s the most relevant were António Sérgio and Raul Proença), for they had the same social role (functionally, at least) that "critics" as different as Erasmus, la Boétie, Spinoza, Bayle, Shaftesbury or Condorcet had in their time concerning Europe and its institutions.

It must be noted that all four trends were inchoative and belligerent, lacking a strong inclination towards any "common generation" factor. In fact, the journal of the 1920s designed to unite all of these young intellectuals against the Republican establishment (*Revista dos homens livres*) only lasted for two issues. Some of the "saudosistas" became "critics" (notably Jaime Cortesão); some of the futurists (*maxime*, Ferro and Almada) ended up being more useful to the fascist regime created in the 1930s than to the politicized *integralistas*. But the great majority of all of these "young men" had at least one thing in common: their professional independence from the university system. A good number of them were high-school teachers, a very well regarded profession at the time. Others were journalists, politicians, publishers, lawyers, and all the other usual professions of intellectuals.

All four trends rejected Republican politics, albeit for different reasons. Futurists had no common specific political agenda and their modernist experience in a country deprived of a modern public sphere ended in the immediate failure that one should expect. Later, they were rediscovered for their literary merits, particularly in the case of Pessoa, who was not only Portugal's greatest poet but also its leading prose writer. "Saudosistas" were engaged in a form of virtuous isolationism set up not so much against Europe as in the defense of the pagan Christianism allegedly specific to the Portuguese soul. The theory of a split progress, a material one attributed to northern Europe and a spiritual one to Portugal, originated from the work of Sampaio Bruno (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) and was developed by Pascoaes and Leonardo Coimbra. In the second half of the twentieth century, it was refashioned by the so-called "Portuguese Philosophy group." *Integralistas*, in turn, despised all forms of democracy, and the Republic as well. And the critics, despite their pro-republican feelings and sympathetic feelings towards democracy, were more and more displeased with the corruption and lawlessness of the Republic. All of this mounted to create a climate of great polemics around the causes of Portugal's decay, a topic in itself inherited from the nineteenth century's most influential generation, the "Geração de 70." *Saudosistas* blamed the attempts to introduce cultural modernity in Portugal for it; futurists had no real overall thesis, just a general contempt for the masses; *integralistas* accused

modern democratic and Bolshevik tendencies of a liberal Republic; and the critics attributed it to the insufficient modernization of the country. They longed for Europe.

We are now in the early 1930s. The Portuguese Republic floundered in 1926 and the military rule yielded to a new Civil Constitution in 1933—the New State (Estado Novo) of Salazar, pro-fascist, nationalist, conservative and antidemocratic. With the absorption of the *integralistas* by the new regime, the self-isolation of the *saudosistas* and the self-destruction of the futurists, the young generation of 1915 condensed itself into the "critics," a coherent and active group striving for the overthrow of Portugal's regime and the change of its social structure. But in the 1930s the likes of Sérgio and Proença, and Cortesão, were no longer alone. A new generation had risen, with new conceptions of what Europe ought to represent to Portugal: Marxism had entered the Portuguese intellectual scene.

It is noteworthy that Marxism arrived in Portugal in a theoretical way, via José Rodrigues Miguéis and Bento de Jesus Caraça, but soon became identified with *neo-realismo*, a literary style updating nineteenth-century realism in order to expose social injustice in fictional form so as to escape censorship. The political use of art endorsed by *neo-realismo* had its counterpart not so much in the official art as in the modern art theories inspired by Proust, Bergson and Gide and introduced in Portugal by José Régio in *Presença*, a journal that ran from 1927 to 1940. Régio and his partners (such as João Gaspar Simões and Adolfo Casais Monteiro) were essentially devoted to aesthetics, although the Marxist accusation of "neutrality" towards fascism is obviously unjust, considering their involvement with oppositionist circles. Nevertheless, in the late 1930s critical discourse on Portugal was still developed outside the university: Sérgio was a publicist, Régio a high-school teacher, and the communists stayed underground. Meanwhile, a series of purges in Portugal's universities had removed many of those deemed "misfits" in the regime's eyes, such as Sílvio Lima, Aurélio Quintanilha and Bento de Jesus Caraça. This persecution also extended to other levels of teaching, for instance, the practice of expelling high-school teachers to the Portuguese colonies in Africa, where they contributed to the local awareness of the nature of the metropolitan regime.

In general terms, Portuguese critical discourse organized itself around two conflicting images of Europe: a progressivist one, democratic and liberal, joining Sérgio and Régio; and a revolutionary one, inspired by the USSR. Gradually, with the growing historical remoteness of the democratic and lib-

eral experience in Portugal, the first trend lost relevance. And the USSR's key role during the Cold War contributed to the enlisting of the Portuguese *intelligentsia* in the ranks of the Portuguese Communist Party, the most effective opposition force to the regime of Salazar. But the success of the Marxist doctrine among Portuguese intellectuals during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s also had a parochial side to it. It was a non-theoretical Marxism. The diffusion via novels and short stories of *neo-realismo* accounts for part of this, but not all. To understand this we need to envisage the philosophical setting of Portugal during the twentieth century.

In the generation of 1890, Positivism played a key role as an ideological mind frame. In the 1915 generation, no mind frame of such a magnitude is to be found—except, of course, anti-Positivism. Over time, theoretical questions lost precedence to a more immediate political agenda, but the amateurish and polemical character of the philosophical argument typical of the Portuguese *intelligentsia* remained the same. As for the humanities, they were obsolete, and the social sciences nearly non-existent.

But the political pressure exerted by Salazar's regime had unexpected effects. Not only did exile to the colonies serve to send some of the more qualified teachers available in the 1930s, 40s and 50s to the more underprivileged parts of colonial Portugal, but the vigilance over academic work led to a more technical and professionalized form of intellectual dispute. This accounts for the gradual updating of the humanities (literary studies in particular) and for the growth of the social sciences. As far as philosophy goes, although Marxism had a great effect on the formation of consciousness, it remained mostly partisan, with no serious philosophical studies until the current regime was established. In fact, the rare attempts to integrate Portugal in the European philosophical debate all ended in minor local disputes: as examples, see the Portuguese instances of logical positivism, phenomenology, existentialism, and Vatican II Catholicism. Only the remnants of *integralismo* and *saudosismo*—assembled in the "Portuguese Philosophy" group that attempted in the 1950s to restore some ideology to the Portuguese mind frame *via* neo-medievalism—had a distinctive stance that differentiated it from the category of pale imitation that encompassed the previous trends.

So, in a way, the public role of philosophy in modern Europe, as propaganda for modern liberties, never came to exist in Portugal; in the first half of the century, that role was exerted mostly through a historical and political debate that had scarce space for philosophy; in the second half, it became an

academic affair, like all the social sciences and humanities, creating a new public that was vaguely familiar with western Europe's trends and Marxist culture, which allowed for the successful revolution in 1974—but only in an indirect and subsidiary way. As for the "Portuguese Philosophy," although it imagined itself as representative of a "true, deep Portugal," it was quite irrelevant to the great majority of the Portuguese people, *intelligentsia* or not.

An interesting case study could be the role played by the twentieth-century "estrangeirados." "Estrangeirados" is a notion ("made strangers" would be a translation as bad as any other) made current by Sérgio in the 1920s in his polemic against the *integralistas* concerning Portuguese isolation vis-à-vis Europe's modern scientific culture. Sérgio contended that a good number of Portugal's finest minds of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were laid to waste by the general reluctance to embrace modernity; for this reason, he wanted to send young students abroad to create a new intellectual elite that would bring Portugal up to date in the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1950s, we can witness a good number of Portugal's most relevant intellectuals departing the country and not returning until democracy was restored in 1974: Eduardo Lourenço, Vasco Magalhães Vilhena, Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, etc. I believe that a case defending the cultural role played by the twentieth century "estrangeirados" would be of special interest (in a more developed format) to a non-Portuguese speaking public, for it depends on the relation of Portuguese *intelligentsia* with its European, American and Brazilian counterparts (for the vast majority of them).

However, it is relevant to point out that both the "estrangeirados" and the "Portuguese Philosophy" group are scarcely mentioned in Portuguese philosophy's current self-image. Take, for instance, the two articles dedicated to philosophy that are included in *Século XX—Panorama da cultura portuguesa*. Together, they affirm most of my presentation here, both in terms of what they say and in terms of what they omit. Lourenço writes a short essayistic text, noting the scarce theoretical imagination of the Portuguese and how that has contributed to a rendering of philosophical issues to the religious framework of Catholic theology. Despite the criticism of religion in the late eighteenth century by the Marquis de Pombal, and the blows of nineteenth-century liberalism (Herculano) and socialism (Antero), the religious bias of "philosophical" thought remained in Portugal until the Republic. Lourenço lists Comte, Bergson, neo-Kantism and mysticism as the main elements of the great divide among Portuguese "philosophers" of the period: rationalism

vs. intuitionism. But he also points out that the rationalism acquired since the 1930s has a Marxist bias, very pragmatic and sub-philosophical until the current regime. In conclusion, Lourenço notes how, in the late 1920s through the 1930s, philosophical work gradually transferred itself to the University, despite the persecutions; this over time amounted to a real change, unlike the apparent originality of the "Portuguese Philosophy" group, which was possible only in a backward, isolated country.

The long-term consequences of that gradual change are evident in António Marques's article concerning the institutionalization of philosophy in the Portuguese university, and, from there, its introduction into Portuguese contemporary culture. Significantly, it addresses the period starting in the late 1960s. The very gap between the years discussed by Lourenço and Marques, the decades of the 1940s-1960s, contains, in our view, the most crucial years, when in their entirety the humanities and social sciences make their way into the university, undermining silently the regime from within. In the second note to this text, Marques admits that he is writing in the name of a contemporary philosophy opposed to the very presumptions of previous philosophy, especially the so-called "Portuguese Philosophy." But his stance is opposed as well to the theologically biased phenomenology familiar to Eduardo Lourenço (Marques correctly associates him, by the way, with Pessoa's influence). This philosophy of the last 35 years is, *in nuce*, a list of academic papers and dissertations, distributed according to specialized branches (political philosophy, logic, etc.), and reveals a tendency towards inbreeding and self-adulation that remains very Portuguese to this day. In fact, when Marques notices on page 53 a continuity between earlier hermeneutics and contemporary philosophy, though without elaboration, he is exactly correct: this is a continuity that pervades all things in a very small society with very conservative elites and that is visible from the very title of his paper, "Self-legitimation and Autonomy" (my translation).

The not-so-vaguely Blumenbergian title echoes not only Marques's influences but also the very element he emphasizes throughout the paper, the relevance of the institutionalization of philosophy in university life for the sake of its very existence. Such a process, however, took decades to achieve and cannot be described without mentioning all the conflicts of the past and present. In what he silences lies a good deal of what is more relevant (even if more backward) in the philosophical speculation that has taken place in Portugal in the last 50 years. Sharing his viewpoint, we shall not dispute the relevance of the dialogue with Europe. But to understand the current crisis in the academic

teaching of philosophy it is necessary to examine its past in relation to the social sciences and humanities, and its future as part of a European network of universities in the making (a.k.a., the Bologna Process).

Note

Readers interested in viewing the bibliographical references for this article can find them, along with other indications, in the published version of my dissertation, entitled *Portugal Extemporâneo* (INCM, Lisbon 2005).

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Reviews and Review-Essays

Margarida Calafate Ribeiro. *Uma história de regressos: império, guerra colonial e pós-colonialismo.* Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2004.

Phillip Rothwell

Margarida Calafate Ribeiro's *Uma história de regressos: Império, guerra colonial e pós-colonialismo* is a landmark in Lusophone studies. It combines profound erudition with superlative clarity, weaving together sociological theories of Portugal's imperial ambivalence and first-rate readings of canonical texts from Camões through to the present day. The sheer breadth of the book's scope is enough to make it essential reading for any serious scholar or student in the fields of Portuguese, Brazilian, or Lusophone African literary studies, as well as for those who welcome innovative interpretations of the shadows and mirrors that structure Portugal's colonial and postcolonial unconscious.

Ribeiro begins her journey through the Portuguese cultural imaginary by interrogating the multiple inflections of Portugal as both center and periphery, running this enlightening line of interrogation through the rest of her book. She reads all the cornerstones of Portugal's historiography—from the most celebratory to the most pessimistic—as symptoms or reflections of the country's rather schizophrenic imaginary, which was constantly buffered by loss and vacancy or compensatory imperial imaginations deployed to conceal lack.

The author traces the cultural manifestations of Portugal's sense of marginal identity at the corner of Europe and as an empire whose center shifted both literally and figuratively to the outskirts of the imperial realm. She offers a seamless narrative that sweeps her reader along from the ambiguous inception of the cultural component of Portuguese imperialism through the loss of Brazil and the Ultimatum shock into the truly intransigent and self-deluding phase of Portuguese imagination triggered by an entrenched New State cloaked in the convenient rhetoric of lusotropicalism.

She draws five centuries worth of Lusophone literary statesmen and women from all corners of the globe into her analysis, building up to close readings of four key works that were produced through the experiences of the Lusophone

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 517-18.
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African wars for independence by Portuguese authors who characterize Portugal's moment of transition into a postcolonial imaginary, when the reality of a lost empire and a displaced and disembodied metropolis finally hit home. These four texts include António Lobo Antunes's *Os cus de Judas*; João de Melo's *Autópsia de um mar de ruínas*; Manuel Alegre's *Jornada de África*; and Lídia Jorge's *A costa dos murmúrios.* Having laid an impressive theoretical framework in the earlier chapters of her book, Ribeiro proceeds to tease out the subtleties and cultural resonances in the works, contextualizing where necessary.

The only complaint I have is really against the conventions of academic books published in Portugal: *Uma história de regressos* lacks an index. Ribeiro covers so much so well that her text will become an invaluable source of reference as well as analysis for any postcolonial study of Portugal or any future work about the literature of the colonial war. The bibliography that she provides is extensive, yet highly relevant. She maintains an inquisitive and critical tone throughout the volume, opening up literary studies in Portugal through a deft and appropriate use of postcolonial theories and a profound sensitivity to literary texts. As a first single-author monograph, *Uma História de Regressos* is already a *magnum opus* and an essential read that marks a change in the way Portuguese literary studies tackle the recent and yet simultaneously distant past.

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Manuel Frias Martins. *In Theory/Em teoria.* Ambar, Porto: Ambar, 2003.

Carlos Leone

It is very unusual to come across a book such as *In Theory/Em teoria*. Easily identifiable through its extra-literary features (its format, for instance), Manuel Frias Martins's newest collection of essays on literary theory and criticism stands out in the Portuguese publishing mainstream because of the fact that it is a bilingual edition. Even in this respect it does not conform to the expected Portuguese and English versions of the same essays; rather, it presents a series of essays that are familiar in the subjects discussed but which are organized independently of one another.

As the quotations from Pessoa aptly indicate at the beginning ("O pacto bilingue/The bilingual pact" 13), the very structure of the book reflects the centrality of English, the new Latin, in today's academia. The first part of the book ("Em teoria (a literatura)" 17-173) is a collection of six essays on theoretical topics in contemporary literary studies that, although not ignored in Portugal, are usually not thought out in close relation to the current state of the art in the English-speaking world. Literary theory and literary criticism, literature and its notions (say, allegory), literary conventions and translation, all of these have competent essayists in Portugal if we consider French and even German influences.

Manuel Frias Martins, in this respect, succeeds in establishing a landmark by introducing a number of authors, works and concepts current in the Anglo-American world to Portuguese academia, where their influence was (and still is) most frequently restricted to very short essays or very lengthy dissertations. Martins's own previous work, especially his PhD-based *Matéria Negra* (1995), can be mentioned as one good, indeed excellent, example of this phenomenon. Certainly not by chance, *In Theory* is dedicated to students—who are, after all, those most attuned with English language and culture in today's Portugal.

Overlapping this broadening of horizons in Portuguese literary theory, the book's second part ("In theory (literature)" 177-285) features seven essays, all

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related to the major English debates of not only literary theory but also cultural studies. It is noteworthy that in Portuguese universities the surge of cultural studies (and of multiculturalism, gender studies, colonial studies, etc.) is due not so much to the evolution of literary studies as to its immobility, leaving the field open to sociology, politics, communication studies and, lately, even history (which, if one is acquainted with the Portuguese practice of history, is indeed even more remarkable). Manuel Frias Martins, in his turn, has no need to depart from his discipline or, in fact, from the positions he has already taken in previous works (such as the privileged place assigned to literary aesthetic experience or the interest in theory as a hermeneutical tool to explore the critical unconscious of the literary text, prior to any criticism).

In fact, he introduces himself as an author into the debates of the English-speaking world, bringing with him the works of other Portuguese authors (in a quite liberal array, from Saramago to Alfredo Margarido, and from Pedro Barbosa to Alberto Pimenta. Plus the poets: Pessoa, obviously, Eugénio de Andrade, Herberto Helder, and others). In doing so, his original—and still faithful—relationship with Russian formalism branches out towards the *topoi* of today's literary theory: the canon and the literature curriculum (not by chance, Frias Martins is one the most knowledgeable Portuguese academics on Harold Bloom), cyberculture, globalization. To those interested in an appraisal of his positions, two suggestions may be valuable: concerning the recent past of literary studies in Portugal, Frias Martins's singular defense of humanism is very relevant; as for his relation with English-language discussions, note his approach to criticism and ethics, which is not completely new yet at the same time is not at all common.

So much with respect to this review, for additional praise should be, at this point, unnecessary; any objections would require far too much room to be properly stated (I am thinking of the references to Nietzsche in particular). The fact of the matter is that this book was designed to overcome the barriers that have limited an author of Pessoa's magnitude to the Portuguese language for so many decades. And it succeeds in doing so. Despite all of the significant changes in the Portuguese public sphere and in the academic world in general, this is no small achievement. Deservedly, it is Manuel Frias Martins's first significant landmark in "the Latin of the wider world."

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David Brookshaw. *Visions of China: Stories from Macau.* Providence, RI/Hong Kong: Gávea-Brown/Hong Kong University Press, 2002.

Christopher Larkosh

Aside from his ongoing work in Luso-Brazilian studies, David Brookshaw, Professor at the University of Bristol in the UK, has been an important scholarly force in challenging the boundaries of Lusophone literary and cultural studies in two additional geographic areas: that of Portuguese-American literature on the one hand, and of Luso-Asian literatures on the other. The ongoing commitment is borne out both in his book *Border Gates: Perceptions of China in Modern Portuguese Literature* (2002) and in translations of Macanese literary works, most notably the 1993 novel by Henrique de Senna Fernandes *A trança feiticeira* (tr. *The Bewitching Braid,* 2004). It is thanks to him that so many of these works from beyond the more strictly imagined boundaries of the Lusophone world, whether embodied in the limited scope of governmental organizations such as the CPLP (or perhaps more regrettably, in the curricula of more traditional Portuguese programs) have become better known and are now available to English-speaking students and readers.

Brookshaw's selection and English-language translations of short stories from Macau, entitled *Visions of China: Stories from Macau,* underscores the fact that the tiny territory of Macau, despite centuries of Portuguese administration and cultural contact, never ceased to be part of China from a cultural and linguistic perspective. While the Macanese and Portuguese inhabitants of the territory included in this collection wrote and published in Portuguese, the vast majority of those living there remained ethnically Cantonese and had little in common with the bicultural and multiethnic origins of the relatively small community that bridged the cultural gap between the Portuguese administrators and the steady flow of residents who arrived from the rest of China from its beginnings in the 16th century and into the 20th and 21st centuries (Brookshaw 11-12).

Brookshaw's compilation includes four of Macau's best-known writers in Portuguese: Deolinda de Conceição, best known for her 1956 collection of short stories *Cheongsam*; the aforementioned Henrique de Senna Fernandes;

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the Portuguese author Maria Ondina Braga, whose career as a teacher of Western languages took her not only to Macau but to Lusophone Africa, pre-liberation Goa and Beijing; and the Portuguese journalist Fernanda Dias. Brookshaw's brief introduction gives basic historical background on the Portuguese presence in Macau and East Asia to place the works in a broader sociocultural context, and the translations of the works approach the difficulties of such multicultural and multilingual texts skillfully, accurately and admirably, without having to recur to translator's notes or glossaries.

For readers in Hong Kong, I can only imagine that this edition will allow the English-speaking inhabitants of that neighboring Special Administrative Region of China to get a more complete perspective on Macau's colonial past and the cultural particularities that distinguish it from its larger neighbor; for many readers in the rest of the Anglophone world, whether those in East Asian studies or Asian diaspora studies, I can imagine that the benefits of having access to these writers' work in English translation will be the same if not greater.

The problems that arise from collections that focus primarily or exclusively on writers in a single colonial language, however, may well give readers pause to wonder what forms of cultural production were available during the 20th century in Chinese, or how these undeniable cultural and linguistic differences contributed to the divisions that the colonial system all-too-often exploited in order to maintain its hegemony. In the near future, if a new generation of postcolonial scholars specializing on southern China and conversant both in European and Chinese cultural production (Mandarin and/or Cantonese) is indeed emerging, they will no doubt approach the question of cultural and linguistic boundaries in transitional regions such as Macau from a more multidirectional perspective.

Brookshaw's collection will serve as a useful introduction to these Lusophone texts from the region for readers with little or no knowledge of Portuguese; as for students of Portuguese in North America and Europe, this edition encourages further research and reading of the original texts, and points toward a more extensive project in postcolonial literary and cultural studies as Macau's culture, language, and even its geography all continue to be reinvented, whether at the crossroads of Chinese state capitalism or through the commercial interventions of international gaming and tourism industries. In this increasingly complex geopolitical milieu, Brookshaw's collection encourages readers to revisit key texts from Macau's late colonial history as an impor-

tant part of any future postcolonial remappings of Luso-Asian literary and cultural studies.

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Unpredictable Coherence: Caetano Veloso Beyond "Ethnic" and Easy-Listening Tunes

Dário Borim Jr.

Abstract: Veloso's latest work upholds an aesthetic disposition: an aversion to conservative criticism and consumer expectation that are both obsessed with ethnic/national authenticity and contemptuous toward non-melodic music. The Bahian resumes an attack on what Charles Perrone and Christopher Dunn have named "xenophobic sentiment in Brazil" and "notions about Brazilian song abroad," or "suave bossa nova" (22). Even though *cê* commands three mellow tunes of amorous contemplation and a modal outcry on racism and anti-racism ideology, the disc intertwines the lines of that aesthetic disposition to the sound of weeping guitars while dramatizing romantic trepidations, sexual imperatives, and gender ambiguities.

Introduction

At first glance, chameleon Caetano Veloso's latest disc, *cê,* comes out deceitfully simple, as if it had been recorded at a make-shift garage studio. The naked and piercing notes of the electric guitar as well as the opening lines of the first tune, "outro" ("other"), could suggest he is wearing a new hat altogether: "you won't even recognize me / even when I go right by you." In reality, though, his highly personal 40th compact disc neither runs out of sync with the artist's previous paths nor dwells on predictable rock-and-roll mannerisms. Strictly speaking, no more than two of his 12 brand new composi-

Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 19/20 (2011): 527-41.
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tions included on *cê* may be regarded as "rock" songs. (Even so, we must not despise the quotation marks on "rock," since Veloso will not incarnate a purist of any stock except for irony or disguise.) In addition, Veloso's flirting with this type of pop language dates back to forty years ago, basically the onset of the tropicalist movement and his career's success with the popmarchinha "Alegria, alegria" (a Philips single, in 1967). There is more wavering continuity in other ways too. In the poetics and themes themselves and in many personal and contextual rumors and controversies associated with the new work's genesis and release in September 2006, this new CD is the typically atypical, or, to confirm the artist's diversity of adjacent attributes even further, it is unpredictably coherent Caetano Veloso all over again.

Upon offering his much anticipated *cê* for downloading through UOL (Brazil's AOL), Veloso introduces the work through a two-and-half page personal and professional narrative. He confesses that he did not avoid doing what some other artists have done in terms of revisiting 1980s rock with a new punk criterion. He warns, though, that his rock tunes do not sound like those he hears and enjoys. He also admits that "minhas lágrimas"[1] ("my tears") and "não me arrependo" ("i don't regret") constitute "the rare autobiographical moments" of the project. (For a complete transcription of the narrative, see "Há canções.") If initially one does not think that *cê*'s release is worth celebrating, one should hold one's tongue and take a listen twice, three times, or maybe more, depending on how sluggishly one's horizon of expectation expands. But it pays, and it does help us think more openly about the boundless and daring aesthetics of free-thinking, vanguard art and media controversy in a world where press journalists strive to survive against the challenges of online communication, and where the mainstream recording industry remains too deeply tied to tonal, easy-listening traditions or too dependent on the sales of repetitive, mass-produced banality.

Rock-and-roll has had a significant function in Veloso's mix-and-match craft since playing and recording with an Argentinean rock group, the Beat Boys, and the legendary, cutting-edge Os Mutantes, in 1967 and 1968. In *Transa* (1972), for example, "You Don't Know Me" is an outstanding rock piece. An original samba of 1955, "Mora na Filosofia," by Monsueto Menezes and Arnaldo Passos, becomes an alluring hybrid tune of rock, ballad, and samba itself. *Jóia* (1975), whose cover depicts Veloso, his first wife, Andréa (Dedé) Gadelha, and their son Moreno all naked, moves in the opposite direction. It fixes a classic rock tune, such as Lennon and McCartney's

"Help," into an enchanting, stylized samba bossa nova frame. *Qualquer coisa,* from the same year, does the same to the Beatles' title "For No One."

Muito (1978), *Outras palavras* (1981), *Velô* (1984), *Estrangeiro* (1989) and *Circuladô* (1991), to cite a few, include several rock tunes and pop-rock compositions that defy single genre specificity, and some of them convey extremely poignant messages of social and political criticism. One of these tunes is "Podres poderes," from *Velô,* which discusses Catholic America's centuries-old tendency to resort to highly charismatic and demagogic leaders or bloody tyrants, rather than democratic systems of expression and power sharing. Whether or not speaking about Brazilian or Latin American woes, they do employ electric instruments (guitars, electric bass, and keyboards). Eventually, rock itself becomes a theme in a much later song, an ironic and encoded piece honoring the legacy of Raul Seixas, in "Rock'n'Raul," from *Noites do norte* (2000).

Rocking and Mourning

A few years after "Rock'n'Raul," the fast tempo mostly marked by Ricardo Dias Gomes's bass and Marcelo Callados's drums in *cê*'s "outro" sketches the image of a persona now walking hurriedly and singing on a fixed pace. It is almost like a robot whose human-like emotions compel him (and there are a few gender markers) to open a dialogue with the listener. He thus sets the tone and introduces the whole gathering of songs on the disc. The voice is one that reveals joy and cruelty upon leaving a painful amorous relationship behind. Comparing himself to a bold rattlesnake eager to strike, the persona urges his ex-lover "to look away." In the meantime, the weeping guitar solo by Pedro Sá (Veloso's partner on stage since 2000) matches the moving lament lines with which the persona acknowledges how badly he and his lover have hurt one another in the past.

Properly speaking, *cê* insinuates that the CD title itself sets forth a speech act directed toward the persona's ex-lover. In a pop ballad called "não me arrependo" ("i don't regret"), the message that comes in the second line goes in straight admonition to that persona's interlocutor: "cê não devia me maldizer assim" ("you shouldn't curse me like that"). Soon this tune will become the saddest of the disc, but, at the same time, the most reaffirming toward the positive sides of a long-lasting relationship gone astray: "no, nothing in this world will / erase the drawing we have made here / not the biggest of your mistakes, or my mistakes, or my remorse will make it disappear." Not even

their death "can disprove / what comes to my voice now," adds the last verse, and the deeply mournful mood is reinforced by Veloso's extraordinarily powerful falsetto.

Mournful is also the core mood of the track named "waly salomão," a compelling eulogy to the slow and solemn beat of Marcelo Callado's drum. It's a funeral march echoing the poet, songwriter and social activist's funeral at Rio's Biblioteca Nacional in May 2003. Salomão, Veloso's old friend, is one among scores of literary figures who have been present in the baiano's songbook: from Guimarães Rosa to Gregório de Matos to Luís Vaz de Camões (see a sizeable list in Wisnik 57). In this particular poem, two of the total three stanzas highlight the deceased's personality traits as well as his art and community work in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, especially the Afro-Reggae of Vigário Geral. In the last stanza, though, the poet turns his eyes inward once again to confess his ongoing melancholy, his "errant serpent's trail / without wings and without poison / without plumage and without sufficient anger."

On the Attack

Here and there, though, the songwriter's poison and anger will be enough to generate verbal and melodic attacks, especially in "rocks," *cê*'s second rock tune, and, to a lesser degree, in "odeio" ("i hate"), a pop-rock ballad with an exquisite minimalist finish. With a catalogue of apparently unrelated items, the voice in "rocks" recalls that "[you] tattooed a ganesh on your thigh / showed up with your mouth purple from botox / demanding rocks / animal / metal / total / lethal / i paid no mind." Then he sees himself as an enemy of his interlocutor and shouts repeatedly: "you were too much the rat with me / you were concretely and simply / too much the rat with me." This particularly accusatory song, with explicit and aggressive heavy-metal overtones, is dedicated to his son Zeca (b. in 1992), who, according to the songwriter, once told his father that his own girlfriend "foi mor rata comigo" (the Portuguese original version of the first verse in the quote above). The angry moral statement fits the father's music and mood very well, though, while alluding to an animal that steals food and doesn't play fair with homeowners, one that sneaks in and out of our abodes without our consent.

In "odeio" the arrangement is uniquely charming, following the modern stylistics of an Arnaldo Antunes or Uakti type of tune and accompaniment for a ballet dance production, such as those by the renowned Belo Horizonte Grupo Corpo. In fact, Caetano Veloso's previous CD recording, *Onqotô,* fea-

tures the soundtrack he had co-written with José Miguel Wisnik for a Corpo dance spectacle in 2005. This poem concocts a collage of scenes not easily construed as a whole, but the opening images, quite impressionistic in nature, display a sequence of yearning and seduction. A little dolphin emerged from "the purple sea" came smiling to the poem's persona.

The scene may very well be a metaphor that captures the excitement of receiving a special electronic message: "today the sun rose red as a face / venus jasmine-diamond / at last someone's email came." Both the dolphin symbolism and the e-mail could have something to do with "a boy that came from arraial do cabo," the name of a town on the coast of Rio as it appears in the third stanza. After all, the boy is "beautiful as a seraphim / strong and happy like a god, like a devil / he came saying yes / only I, old, am ugly and nobody." Between those two stanzas, though, there comes one in which "a vast cornucopia of women arrived / all showing their mucus to me / the ocean opened up in the midst of the pleasures / dunes of gold and ivory / it was so, it is so, but this way it's too much too." Following this erratically erotic landscape, which one may associate with the sexual fantasies of an aging man, there comes a striking refrain, "i hate you, i hate you, i hate you, i hate."

The fragmentary, cryptic, and impressionistic characteristics of "odeio" make it almost impossible for the reader/listener to come to grips with an indisputable interpretation of its overall semantics. By any chance does the persona of the poem hate the boy from Arraial do Cabo? Or, is it, perhaps, one of the many women, blonde or black ("dunes of gold and ivory"), who are "showing their mucus" to him? One could guess that the refrain "odeio você" does not apply to either of those females in lust or to that male seraphim, but to the same "cê" of the opening song.

An Open Book

But who knows who is "cê"? What is certainly true is that Caetano Veloso's private life has been an open book which he shares with fans and friends in various capacities. Apart from his tendency to evoke real-life situations in his long career as songwriter, he has been very candid about issues like romance and sexuality in his four books of prose (*O mundo não é chato* was published in 2004). He has been compared to Bob Dylan, for example, but their differences can be profound precisely in their (un)willingness to discuss their own private lives. The Bahian accedes that the Minnesotan singer-songwriter is "an artist who hides his personality behind the art he is creating. He would never

ever touch his work with explanation or analysis. I am the opposite. I am almost not an artist" (Frere-Jones 90).

In *Tropical Truth,* for example, Veloso discusses his erotic interest in both women and men, while arguing that through his lifetime he has been "engaged much more frequently in heterosexual than homosexual practice" (309). Because of such a past (including two traditional marriages, of about 20 years each [10 years, then, in 1997]), he contends that he could consider himself a heterosexual, as many other artists "vaguely homoerotic" have done (309). But he doesn't, since "clarity of sexual orientation is meaningless except when it manifests itself spontaneously" (309-310).

Loaded with triangular relationship complexities involving homo- and heterosexual connections, the early disputes and ultimate divorce from his second wife (24 years younger than him), Paula Lavigne, have not been outside the merciless and oppressive world of rumors and confabulations about his sexuality. Unequivocally, at nearly 65 years of age, Veloso continues to be a sexual icon as well as a target of multiple obsessions and tabloid-like magazines and blogs that seek stories as provocative as possible in order to sell or entertain their readers' avid curiosities.[2]

This essay has nothing to attest to, as far as the veracity of Veloso's personal innuendoes is concerned. However, what comes across as an interesting element for an analysis of gender and romance issues in *cê* is that the CD is extra rich in gender-based signals. What matters is how Veloso's poetry builds quite heavily on an antagonism tied up on gender lines. Under the delicate sounds of music that would suit a modern ballet, the refrain and title-phrase "i hate you" engenders a semantic short-circuit while adding the final touch of fragmentation to a sense of divided self exposed through disjointed images of numberless female attractions at his disposal and an unfulfilled homoerotic desire: "the one who i most wanted, if wanting depended on me, / came and did not come."

Previously released compositions by Veloso, such as "Tradição" (*Tropicália* 2, 1993), "Branquinha" (*Estrangeiro*), and "Eu sou neguinha?" (*Caetano,* 1987), evoke his persona's complex sexual self-image. In the first title, the poetic voice extols and flirts with a female friend's boyfriend, "sempre rindo e sempre me olhando." In the second piece he delineates himself as a "macaco complexo" of "sexo equívoco." In the third song, the persona is "totalmente terceiro sexo / totalmente terceiro mundo / terceiro milênio." In *cê,* ambivalence, ambiguity, and a profound sense of fear and sexual misfit go hand in

hand in songs with a prevailing man-to-woman love discourse, such as "odeio" and another two cuts carrying the persona's love message for one who seems to be the same *mestiça* muse of two songs, "deusa urbana" ("urban goddess") and "musa híbrida" ("hybrid muse"). Mellow rhythm and delicate arrangements like those of the Tribalistas trio (Marisa Monte, Carlinhos Brown, and Arnaldo Antunes) evoke the supposed bisexual triangular affair: "i am afraid of him, i am afraid of her / the two together where I could not get in."

The poem sustains a series of contradictory statements, one of which exposes the double fear of falling in love and not falling in love with the woman he calls "the sun's granddaughter," a muse of "purple mucus membrane, cock [*sic*, turtledove] colored tit." In the same mode, the persona confides that "with you I really have to accept it / I really have to not accept it / heterodox sex, lapses of desire / when suddenly i see the sky cave in on us."

Much less catastrophic—actually utopian, instead—seem to be now the perspectives upon a relationship with the "coppery panther" in that "cross-breeding song," a song's reference to itself in "hybrid muse." An agreeable type of pop-samba based on a fused version of olodum drumming, the composition is all about a rather reified cat of "green eyes and coppery coil" and "bundo lips." With the Brazilian melting-pot woman that descends from the "dongo, congo, ge, tupi, dutch, Lusitanian, Hebrew, and moor," the poet wishes to "remake the world."

Gender and Tongue Statements

Except for the hybrid muse/urban goddess figure, females are not necessarily revered on *cê*. The most blatant expression of a wholesome disappointment in women in general obviously comes from "homem" ("man"). The poem's persona reaffirms his pride in being a male that is not "jealous of maternity / or of lactation." He couldn't care less for "adiposity," "menstruation," "sagacity," "intuition," "faithfulness" or "dissimulation." He actually envies nothing in women but their "longevity" and "multiple orgasm." Here, his markers of maleness, in turn, don't go beyond "loose skin on muscle" and "thick hair" in his nose, whereas in the opening cut of the disc, "outro," the persona depicts himself as "feliz e mau como um pau duro / acendendo-se no escuro" ("happy and cruel like a hard on / lighting itself up in the dark").

Differences in men's and women's sexual climax patterns are indeed the only theme of a laconic, jazzy, bossa-novist techno keyboard tune of three verses, 18 words total, "porquê" ("why?"). Embodying a Portuguese man, the

persona expresses himself, with a European Portuguese accent and syntax, an idiom that means nothing to the average Brazilian: "estou-me a vir," or "i'm coming." Then he wonders about what goes on in the depths of his female sexual partner's genitalia, perhaps alluding to the difficulties that some of them may have at reaching orgasm: "and you, how can you keep inside yourself?" *Expresso* writer Inês Pedrosa contends that "out of the spout from a purely ejaculatory song" there comes a verse with a Luis Vaz de Camões type of precision (the original wording of that inquiry): "e tu, como é que te tens por dentro?" With an exhaustive repetition of the phrase "i'm coming," in a way that might represent ongoing intercourse (a case of musical isomorphism between meaning and form), the voice asks again, "why don't you come too?" Pedrosa is probably right in her assumption that the dialectal differences between Brazilian and European Portuguese will allow this song to go unscathed in the South American country. However, she expects that the sort of plain sexual language at work in "porquê?," with a phrase register exclusively heard in bedrooms around Portugal, will undoubtedly bring about "an orgasmic scandal in our prudish country."

What is a given is that Veloso here continues experimenting with "Camões' tongue." In an interview with another *Expresso* writer, Sofia Cerveira, he reiterates his penchant for all languages, but especially Portuguese. He expounds the song as a gesture of affection for the European vernacular use of the reflexive verb "vir," rather than an opportunity to shock people (Cerveira). Veloso has indeed celebrated this linguistic fascination of his in various ways. One of the best known musical results is that in which he makes the Portuguese tongue itself the explicit and central theme of "Língua." This extraordinarily complex and jocose Latin-samba-rap from *Velô* encompasses a personal, social, and literary statement on the musicality of the Portuguese language, in general, and of the Brazilian variation of it, in particular.[3]

Cities, Dreams, and Tears

If only a few (but exceptional) words spurt out in "estou-me a vir," a total writer's block occurs in the lyrics of another tune on *cê*. For a while it seems to the persona in "minhas lágrimas" that nothing at all would appear on the white page, as he hovers and tries to write a song on a plane over the city of Los Angeles. This is a travel tune in which the coast of California represents something similar to the image of the old São Francisco river in "O ciúme," from the album *Caetano*, released twenty years ago, soon after Velsoso's first

divorce. The persona onboard a boat is wounded by jealousy's "flecha negra" ("black arrow") and watches the sun, villages, and towns move along the riverbanks of Minas, Bahia, Sergipe, and Alagoas. To some fado-like chords of a Portuguese guitar, the communities on those shores mirror the poet's melancholy, as they all seem somnolent and powerless as well as depressed and deprived of some minimal comfort, with "tantas almas esticadas como um curtume" ("so many souls stretched out on the tannery").

Painted in that likewise gloomy scenario, Los Angeles is not alone in Veloso's songbook. In a recent book on Veloso, Guilherme Wisnik argues that the *baiano* has become the Brazilian songwriter with the largest number of tunes evoking different cities, from Salvador to São Paulo, Santo Amaro to Aracaju, London to New York, and the list goes on and on (104). The exterior correlative, in this case, hides no secret: from where the poet sits and thinks in mid-air about his personal life, the largest city of western North America looks dry and desolate, like the desert and dirty sea around it. Los Angeles, Baja California, and surrounding islands reflect from below the plane the low spirits of the poet above them. His is now an inner self devoid of colors, except for that dust-looking hue on the aircraft carpet and for the thick darkness of the Pacific ocean itself. Impotent and pathetic against the intransigent white page, the poem ends by dramatizing, in superb metaphor, the persona's unfulfilled need (and space) to vent or decorate his anguish through figurative language and melodies: "nada serve de chão / onde caiam minhas lágrimas" ("nothing is a floor / where my tears may fall").

In other places and circumstances, however, the poet encounters plenty of ways and means to sketch his discursive lines and musical phrases. In the romantic, sexually undertoned, and minimalist pop ballad "um sonho," poetic and melodic craftsmanship reminds us of Veloso's best tonal gems written between the early 1970s and early 1980s. It suffices to recall the plasticity and sonority of a few contemplative verses of "um sonho" in Portuguese (unfortunately without the same effect in the English translation). First comes a certain cubist combination of sizes, tints, and textures: "lua na folha molhada / brilho azul-branco / olho-água, vermelho da calha nua" (or, "moon on the wet leaf / blue-whiteshined / eye-watered, red like a naked gutter"). Later, there is a mesmerizing image of synesthesia: "tua pele se espalha / ao som de minha mão" ("your skin spreads to the sound of my hand").

An Interpreter of Brazil

Caetano Veloso would not be Caetano Veloso anymore, at 64, if he did not continue to write songs or prose by juxtaposing minor or major elements (and even songs) that conflict one another. That is how he finishes *cê*. Following the most enchanting tonal tune of the disc, "um sonho," he wraps up his gathering of brand new titles with a modal composition of social and political commentary: the ironic and sardonic rap entitled "o herói" ("the hero").

It tells in first-person the story of an individual born in a *favela,* who "barely escaped being a bandit" and "always wished for everything that denied / this stained country." His wish was to "foster racial hatred here / and a clear separation between the races." While declaring no interest in making himself a sports celebrity or "playing soccer for these rats," he concedes he once was a mulatto, one of millions, but now he wants to be "100% black, american / south african, anything but the saint / that the breeze in brazil sways and kisses." Later on in life this character realizes that he can no longer wear that mask, that he is like other Afro-Brazilians whom he disdained. He now assumes the role of a Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's quintessential Brazilian, the cordial man, and that of a living proof of Brazil's mythic racial democracy.[4]

Within Veloso's typical scheme of mixed messages, much like another stylized rap, "Haiti" (with lyrics of his own, and music co-written by him and Gilberto Gil, on *Tropicália* 2), it is never an easy task to pinpoint the side where authorial opinion or sarcasm lies. What is clear, though, is how "o herói" reflects an ongoing dispute in the country regarding affirmative action measures, especially the controversial quota system implemented by some state universities, and, most of all, by Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's federal government. One of the questions that pops up is, of course, how African and how Indian one has to be in order to qualify for such privileges in a nation so evidently and overwhelmingly mixed in terms of race and ethnicity.

The other issue is whether such measures and mind-sets will contribute to justice or to racial hatred. Part of the irony in "o herói" rests on the tenets of an identity ideology brought somewhat recently into that country where the good and bad sides of its melting pot experiences have not been openly challenged or discussed, but simply propagated among elite thinkers and writers, like Gilberto Freyre, and samba composers, like Ary Barroso. Closing his own life story, Veloso's song's fictional storyteller goes back to a sarcastic "state of spiritual glory," under which he is the hero, but "only god knows how

it hurts." To sum it up, one would construe this new rap's statement as an allegory that profiles the songwriter's denial of Brazil's racial democracy and his understanding of prejudice and injustice against nonwhite people, but, also, his skepticism toward certain imported strategies for eradicating social ills diagnosed as racially motivated evils.

Having lived in Salvador for five years as a musician as well as a philosophy student, Veloso must have witnessed firsthand a variety of abuses toward blacks and mixed-raced individuals, including the violent scenes observed at Jorge Amado's museum in Pelourinho, which are described in "Haiti."[5]

As hundreds of his written pieces and interviews demonstrate, racial relations in Brazil have been of great interest to this serious but unconventional interpreter of a nation which, he thinks, has the power to do better than the United States in the 21st century, especially because of our racial relations model. "I love the United States," he declared at a formal speech he gave at São Paulo's Museu de Arte Moderna in 1993 (Bloch). However, he just doesn't "expect any less from Brazil than to advance much of what has been accomplished there [in the U.S.]" (Bloch).

What Veloso does not perceive as anything positive, as he told *O Globo* journalist Arnaldo Bloch in what appears to have been an exclusive interview, is Brazilians' current obsession with African-American culture. Blacks in Brazil buy it all when it comes to demands claimed by blacks in the United States, but those Brazilians "sometimes end up attacking things that the Brazilian *mestiços* have achieved, obtained, and consummated" (Bloch).

Conclusion

For all the sexual and gender issues here discussed, Veloso's disc as a whole displays a plethora of poetic representations and a pervasive preoccupation with sex and gloom, as well as romance and desire, without leaving aside a marginal regard for Brazilian social and political issues. In ten out of twelve songs, there is an impressionistic, minimalist or otherwise sophisticated sketch of at least one broken heart, a mesmerized lover, or somebody excited by a lustful drive. There must not have been another disc by Veloso with such a high ratio of concerns for Venus matters. Perhaps even more striking is the number of songs evoking non-traditional sexual identities or gender differences (three out of twelve titles). In 1997 Veloso wrote that not being so sure about his own sexual inclination, he would "make a great queer" (*Tropical Truth* 309). Ten years later, maybe for the first time in his artistic career,

Veloso's personal music celebrates maleness, especially by declaring the many reasons why one should be glad not to be female.

In terms of stylistics, *cê* suggests once more that Veloso is definitely not satisfied with the mission of writing nothing but Brazilian "ethnic" or easy-listening romantic tunes. His aesthetic disposition actually reminds us of two interrelated statements made famous by Veloso in two different decades. In the 1960s, he rejected the country's spirit of xenophobia, metonymically reflected in the rejection of the electric guitar, and "folksiness that perpetuated underdevelopment" (*Tropical Truth* 138-39). Approximately 20 years later, he added this closing remark to his impressionistic rock ballad "O estrangeiro" (title track of his 1989 album): "Some may like a soft Brazilian singer. But I've given up all attempts at perfection." The new CD reconfirms both assertions. It does not seek the folksy authenticity of MPB (Brazilian Popular Music), arguably the main reason why tropicalists like him were abhorred in the 1960s. It does not pursue the melodic but frozen amenities of the bossa nova style either, which is an issue between the lines in the second statement.[6]

In a press conference given in December 2006, Veloso declared that a couple of years prior to the recording months of *cê* he had gone through the worst phase of his entire life (see Lichote). The languages of rock and pop were selected for the expression of all that anguish and turbulence, which was also the case when he wrote and recorded *Caetano Veloso* (1971) and *Transa,* during the years of exile in England (1969-1972). For those who can bypass their initial frustration at a new disc by Veloso with no afoxé, samba, xote, or any taste of Bahia or Rio for that matter, except for a homeopathic dose in "musa híbrida," *cê* may indeed prove to be an unusually powerful contemporary work that escapes all labels. The CD reminds us that Veloso has not lost his complex ties with and will to react to time passing in world music. Obviously, he has not resigned himself to any formula for commercial success either, even though he has been bad-mouthed as a sell-out since *Prenda minha* (1998) sold more than one million copies.

This is definitely another one of Veloso's predictably unpredictable discs, which seem never to be made for others to approve or disapprove, but to satisfy his love of singing, his romantic and emotional imperatives, as well as his ethical and intellectual insatiability. In her short but highly elucidating essay, Inês Pedrosa quotes Agostinho da Silva, who had a significant influence over Veloso's education (*Tropical Truth* 54-55, 188, 213): "the only coherence that we can find is that of our being one thing and its opposite at the same

time." Again and again Veloso proves he is multiple and protean, restless and courageous, even outspoken and merciless when the occasion calls for it. Most of all, *cê* sounds genuine, the believable result of an aesthetic sincerity and a vanguard spirit of innovation without reservation. At its core are real pains and dreams, doubts and frowns at himself, his muses (male and female), and the world beyond all of them, a world of symbolic violence, as well as media harassment and intervention. Within and without *cê,* this is a world where Caetano Veloso partakes in polemics and scandals, while thriving as a serious artist with an acute interest in understanding and explaining human enigmas and social contradictions.

Notes

[1] The transcription of the disc and song titles in small letters is faithful to their appearance on *cê*'s cover and insert. This essay will quote from the English translation verses that accompany the original Portuguese lyrics in that insert. English translations of other quotes from Portuguese originals are my own.

[2] Veloso certainly resents the harassment from the media, especially when reporters and other opportunists show no respect for any boundaries of personal privacy. In a recent interview with Sofia Cerveira, for instance, he compares his living condition in Rio to that of people on reality shows like Big Brother (Cerveira). However, unsanctioned intrusion may happen anywhere, including Salvador, where he was photographed swimming on a beach with a Bahian black model, Denise Assis dos Santos, whose features resemble those of the "panther" in two of the songs on *cê*, "deusa urbana" and "musa híbrida." A scandal, with Levigne's bombastic reactions and law suit, followed immediately, since *Isto É Gente* published one of these pictures on its cover and claimed, in its main sensationalist article, "O desbunde de Caetano" (see Leon), that Veloso had been wearing nothing but underwear. Further uproar came when the young Bahian woman posed for the adult magazine *Sexy* and commented on her relationship with Veloso. The songwriter protested against the report in a published letter to the magazine (see "Caetano contesta") and sued *Sexy*, while attempting to prevent the release of the March 2006 issue with Denise Assis' photographic essay (see Pereira).

[3] For an analysis of "Língua" and further discussion on the role of the Portuguese language and poets (especially Fernando Pessoa) in Veloso's writing, see Borim's "Roçando a língua de Camões."

[4] Critical literature on Brazil's racial democracy and Holanda's concept of *homem cordial* is very extensive. For an interesting gathering of opinions on these issues see Silviano Santiago's book on Holanda and Octavio Paz, Lund and McNee's volume on Freyre within Latin American studies, and all five articles dedicated to 100 years of Gilberto Freyre in *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* 4/5, especially the essays by Mary Del Priore and João Cezar de Castro Rocha. For a political and historical approach to Veloso's socially aware music, see Borim's "Morte e vida Tropicália."

[5] For a convincing analysis of this song and the circumstances of its writing, see Christopher Dunn (193-4).

[6] According to Wisnik, this statement was originally uttered by Bob Dylan regarding João Gilberto (Wisnik 56). For an enlightening review and contextualization of "Estrangeiro" and the citation from Dylan's LP *Bringing It All Back,* see Perrone and Dunn (especially 22-3 and 36).

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